Common Cold, Adult

A cold is an infection of the air passages to the lungs (*upper respiratory system*). This means it affects the nose, throat and ears. Colds can spread from person to person (*contagious*), especially during the first 3 to 4 days. Cold germs are spread by coughs, sneezes, and hand to hand contact. A cold usually clears up in a few days, but some people may be sick for a week or two.

HOME CARE

- Only take medication as directed by your doctor.
- Blow your nose gently. Blowing too hard may cause a nose bleed.
- Run a cool-mist humidifier. This is a quiet machine that sprays a fine cool mist in the air. Humidifiers make a room moist, which can loosen mucus.
- Rest and get plenty of sleep.
- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough.
- Drink enough water and fluids to keep your pee (*urine*) clear or pale yellow.

GET HELP IF:

- You develop a fever of 100.5°F (38.1°C) or higher which lasts 2 days or more, and is not controlled by medication.
- Your sore throat gets worse or you have white or yellow spots in your throat.
- Your cough gets worse or it lasts more than 10 days.
- You develop a rash.
- You develop large or tender bumps on your neck.
- You have an earache or headache.
- You have thick, greenish or yellowish discharge from your nose.
- You cough up thick yellow, green, gray or bloody mucus.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You have trouble breathing.
- You have chest pain.
- Your skin or nails look gray or blue.
- You develop a fever of 102°F (38.9°C) or higher.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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