Common Cold, Adult

An upper respiratory tract infection, or cold, is a viral infection of the air passages to the lung. Colds are contagious, especially during the first 3 or 4 days. Antibiotics cannot cure a cold. Cold germs are spread by coughs, sneezes, and hand to hand contact. A respiratory tract infection usually clears up in a few days, but some people may be sick for a week or two.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Be careful not to blow your nose too hard. This may cause a nosebleed.
- Use a **cool-mist** humidifier (vaporizer) to increase air moisture. This will make it easier for you to breath. **Do not use hot steam.**
- Rest as much as possible and get plenty of sleep.
- Wash your hands often, especially after you blow your nose. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of clear liquids every day, such as water, fruit juices, tea, clear soups, and carbonated beverages.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- An oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests, which lasts 2 days or more, and is not controlled by medication.
- You have a sore throat that gets worse or you see white or yellow spots in your throat.
- Your cough gets worse or lasts more than 10 days.
- You have a rash somewhere on your skin. You have large and tender lumps in your neck.
- You have an earache or a headache.
- You have thick, greenish or yellowish discharge from your nose.
- You cough-up thick yellow, green, gray or bloody *mucus* (secretions).

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

You have trouble breathing, chest pain, or your skin or nails look gray or blue.

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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