

Colds

A cold, also known as an upper respiratory tract infection, is caused by a virus and therefore cannot be treated with antibiotics. It is spread by hand contact, coughing, & sneezing. This is why it is important to wash your hands and to cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.

Symptoms:

- Runny nose or congestion (may be clear, yellow, green)
- Fever (a temperature > 100.4)
- Sore or scratchy throat
- Runny or watery eyes
- Hoarseness or a raspy-sounding voice or cry
- Cough, usually productive

Treatment:

Antibiotics, decongestants, and over-the-counter cough & cold medications are NOT recommended for children. The FDA (Food & Drug Administration) has announced that decongestants and cold preparation may actually be harmful to children under 6 years-old. To help with symptoms, try:

- Infants: Apply 1-2 drops of nasal saline drops to each nostril while laying down. If using a bulb suction, wait a minute after using the saline to suction. Take care to not place it into the nose too far and be sure to clean the tip after each use.
- Older Children: Use nasal saline spray 4 times a day. Place the nozzle of the saline spray in the right nostril. Hold the left nostril closed by using your finger. Spray 3 drops of the saline into the right nostril. Repeat on the other side. Wait a few minutes to allow the saline to work before blowing the nose.

- Humidifier: place a humidifier in your child's room while sleeping to make the room less dry. Be consistent with cleaning the humidifier to keep it mold free.
- Elevate the head of the bed at night to improve breathing
- Increase fluids
- Use acetaminophen for fevers > 102 or if your child is uncomfortable. Ibuprofen may be used in children > 6 months old
- Feed infants smaller amounts more frequently because infants are nose breathers.

Length of Cold:

It is not uncommon for the cough to last up to 2–3 weeks and for the nasal discharge or congestion to last up to 2 weeks.

When to See Your Provider:

- Difficult or increased work of breathing
- Wheezing
- Lethargy (unable to awaken)
- High fever that does not respond to acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Signs of dehydration
- Symptoms lasting more than 2 weeks, especially if worsening
- Any concerns that you may have

Signs of Dehydration:

- Dry mucus membranes (cracking of the lips, dry inside of mouth)
- No tears when crying
- No urine in over 8 hours
- Unable to arouse your child

Cedar Park Pediatrics & Family Medicine
345 Cypress Creek Road, Ste. 104
Cedar Park, TX 78613
(512) 336-2777
www.cedarparkdoctors.com