



The Daily Sneeze

Important Cold and Flu Self-Care Information



Self-Care Savvy

Okay...you've been to the clinic and, after some poking, prodding and possibly some lab tests, the staff told you that you have a viral infection. No magic medication--you just need to ride it out. But what about the fact that you still feel horrible? Here are a few self-care guidelines that might make the next few days a little easier to get through:

For a Sore throat:

- Try a warm salt-water gargle every few hours. Mix up 1/4 teaspoon salt with 1/2 cup warm water and gargle away.
- Keep your throat moist by drinking warm or cold beverages (whichever soothes you the most): tea with lemon or honey, ice water, juice, popsicle.
- Suck on cough drops, lozenges, or hard candy.
- Over-the-counter pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin) can help ease the pain.
- If you're a smoker, now is a great time to quit!

For a Fever:

- Drink plenty of liquids to avoid dehydration. Even a slight temp will cause your body to lose fluid faster than normal.
- If your temperature is higher than 101 F. or you are really uncomfortable, acetaminophen or ibuprofen can reduce fever. Always follow the label directions for dose.
- Washing yourself with lukewarm water can bring some relief from the discomfort of a fever.

For Nasal Congestion:

- A great home treatment for a stuffy nose is a warm steamy shower. If you're not up to a full shower, try just being in the bathroom with the shower running.
- Purchase a vaporizer that will allow you to humidify the air around you.
- Some over-the-counter decongestants (like Sudafed) can help dry up mucus production.

For a Cough:

- If your cough is producing "stuff", you'll want that to continue. Drink plenty of liquids and use a warm, steamy shower or a vaporizer to keep the mucus loose.
- Over-the-counter cough medicines that contain an expectorant will help keep things moving up and out!
- If your cough is not producing "stuff", drink plenty of beverages, especially those that soothe a sore throat to bring some relief.
- Cough drops, lozenges, or hard candy can provide some much-needed moisture to an irritated throat.
- If your cough is keeping you from getting adequate sleep, contact your health care provider about a prescription cough suppressant.

Self-Care Shopping List

Some over-the-counter medications and supplies can bring much needed relief from cold and flu symptoms:

- Juice, water or sports drinks
- Cool-mist vaporizer/humidifier
- Nasal saline drops
- Acetaminophen
- Ibuprofen
- Naproxen
- Cough drops/lozenges
- Cough expectorant
- Cough suppressant
- Decongestant
- Antihistamine
- Digital thermometer

Whatever happened to H1N1?

You might not hear much about this strain of influenza, but it is still circulating and causing illness. This year's vaccine, in fact, includes protection from H1N1 as well as the flu strains predicted to be the most prevalent. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people have become infected by touching a surface or object with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. The symptoms of flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. If you are sick, you should stay home and keep away from others. Avoid travel, work or school for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.



Antibiotics Not Helpful for Curing Common Cold

Over 100 different viruses have been identified as causing the common cold in humans...more than 100 nasty viruses lurking out there, just waiting to make you sick.

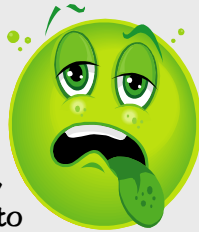
Wouldn't it be great if some medication existed that would allow your cold to be cured in a matter of hours? It's too bad, then, that antibiotics are absolutely useless in curing colds. Antibiotics are designed for treating bacterial infections and are not effective against the many viruses that cause uncomplicated colds. In some instances, a secondary bacterial infection occurs with a cold. An example of this is a sinus infection. Your health care provider will look for

signs of a bacterial infection and may order lab tests during an examination to determine if your body is trying to fight a bacterial infection versus a virus. In recent years, health care providers have moved away from prescribing antibiotics for upper respiratory illnesses unless the illness is clearly caused by a bacteria and there are several good reasons for this:

- 1) Antibiotics have no effect on viruses,
- 2) Antibiotics are rather indiscriminate and kill off beneficial bacteria as well as those that cause harm,
- 3) Bacteria can become resistant to antibiotics making it more difficult for an antibiotic to be effective, and
- 4) like all medications, antibiotics can cause reactions that can be harmful or dangerous.

Prevent the Spread of Colds and Flu

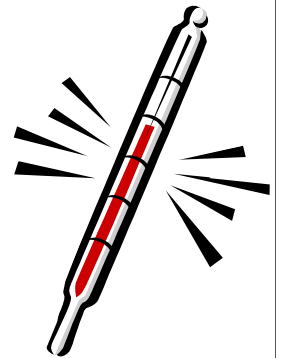
- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue or your upper sleeve, NOT your hand.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If water isn't available, use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, mouth and ears.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to keep them from getting sick. If you are concerned about missing class, email or call your instructors to discuss what you can do to stay caught up while staying home.
- Get a flu shot. It's a very simple but effective way to prevent illness and is a good investment for students. For \$20, students get good protection from an illness that has the potential to keep them out of class for up to a week! Call Student Health Services Medical Clinic at 389-6276 for more information.



When to Make a Clinic Appointment

Cold medicines and pain relievers may provide relief from symptoms but will NOT shorten your cold or flu. Usually you will get better without medications within a couple weeks. Some symptoms may indicate a need to see a health care provider, such as:

- **Fever over 103° F**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **Severe sore throat or an extremely red throat**
- **Pain in one or both ears**
- **Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen**
- **Sudden dizziness**
- **Confusion**
- **Severe headache with a fever**
- **Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough**
- **Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea**
- **If symptoms last 10 days or more**



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Health **P** eers
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Student Health Services
MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

507-389-6276

www.mnsu.edu/shs

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