

:: Cold & Flu ::

If you've ever had a bad cold or the flu you know how you feel: stuffy nose, aching muscles, sweating, chills, fever, sore throat, and possibly other symptoms as well. When it comes to catching a cold or flu, remember the old saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Myths and facts about colds and the flu

MYTH: You can catch the flu from a flu shot.

FACT: The flu vaccine is made from an inactivate virus, so you cannot get the flu from a flu shot. (Some people may be sore in the area where the shot was given and, in a few cases, may develop a fever and muscle aches for a few days; but that is not the flu!).

MYTH: There is nothing you can do once you get sick with the flu; stay at home in bed!

FACT: Antivirals, when started within 2 days after flu symptoms appear, reduce the duration of the illness and severity of symptoms.

MYTH: You can catch a cold or the flu from going outside in cold weather.

FACT: While the cold and flu are more common in winter months, it is due to that time of year being the time when the virus is spread; it has nothing to do with being outside in cold weather.

MYTH: Starve a cold and feed a fever (flu).

FACT: This is definitely NOT a good idea in either case! You need more fluids than usual when suffering with a cold or the flu. Drink plenty of water or juice, and eat the necessary food to satisfy your appetite.

Complication of a cold and the flu

Talk to your doctor if you experience any of the following:

- Unusually severe cold symptoms.
- High fever.
- Ear pain.
- Sinus-type headache.
- Cough that gets worse while other cold symptoms improve.
- Flare up of any chronic lung problem, such as asthma.
- Chest pain as a result of coughing.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Coughing up yellow-green or bloody phlegm.

Preventing colds

- Avoid close contact with people who have a cold, especially during the first few days when they are most likely to spread the infection.
- Wash your hands after touching someone who has a cold, touching an object they have touched and after blowing your nose.

- Keep your fingers away from your nose and your eyes to avoid infecting yourself with cold virus particles that you may have picked up.
- Put an additional hand towel in the bathroom for healthy people to use.
- Keep an eye on the humidity of your environment so that your sinuses do not dry out.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze. Throw the tissue away after use and wash your hands.

If you would like more information about preventing colds or the flu, contact your local occupational health/health care professional, health care facility or physician.

Preventing the flu

- Get a flu vaccine (either a flu shot or a nasal spray vaccine).
- Get plenty of rest and sleep.
- Eat food items such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Decrease disease-causing germs on surfaces by wiping them with a disinfectant.
- Avoid the use of antibiotic soaps.
- **WASH YOUR HANDS REGULARLY**, especially after using the rest room.

