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 inactivated 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 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.

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.

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.