



Self-care Information

Cold Symptoms

Tips on how you can manage cold symptoms
“Supporting you to look after you”

- You can treat a cold without seeing a GP.
- You should begin to feel better in about one to two weeks.
- Cold symptoms are the same in adults and children, but can last longer in children:
 - Blocked or runny nose
 - Sneezing & coughing
 - Sore throat
 - Raised temperature
 - Muscle aches
 - Headache
 - Pressure in your ears and face
 - Loss of taste and / or smell

Your community pharmacy can help with cold symptoms.

- You can buy cough and cold medicines for adults and children from pharmacies or supermarkets.
- Ask your pharmacist which treatment to buy if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or buying for a child, some treatments are not suitable for younger children.



Let your pharmacist know if you take any other medicines, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, as this may affect which treatments you can use safely.

Paracetamol or ibuprofen can ease aches or lower a temperature.

- Be careful not to use cough and cold medicines if you're taking paracetamol and ibuprofen tablets. Cough and cold medicines often also contain paracetamol and ibuprofen so it can be easy to take more than the recommended dose. Speak to a pharmacist for advice.

Decongestant nasal sprays can help with a blocked nose.

- Nasal sprays are preferred to tablets because they work faster.
- Decongestants should not be given to children under 6 years of age.
- Children aged 6-12 years should not use them for more than 5 days.
- People over 12 years old should not use them for more than 7 days.

Other useful treatments.

- Throat lozenges - for a sore throat.
- Inhalants (eucalyptus, menthol) can also help ease a blocked nose.

Did you know?

Did you know that antibiotics do not work for colds because colds are caused by viruses not bacteria.

You could try...

- ✓ Resting and sleeping.
- ✓ Drinking plenty of water (fruit juice or squash mixed with water is OK) to avoid getting dehydrated.
- ✓ Gargle salt water to soothe a sore throat (not suitable for children).



How to avoid spreading a cold to others:

Colds are caused by viruses (germs) and are easily spread to other people. You are infectious until all your symptoms have gone.



- ✓ If you have a high temperature or you do not feel well enough to do your normal activities, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people until you feel better.
- ✓ Wash your hands often with warm water and soap.
- ✓ Put any used tissues in the bin as quickly as possible to prevent the spread of germs.



See your GP or call 111 if:

- Symptoms do not improve after 3 weeks.
- Symptoms get suddenly worse.
- Your temperature is very high or you feel hot and shivery.
- You're worried about your child's symptoms.
- You're feeling short of breath or develop chest pain.
- You have a long-term medical condition - for example diabetes, or a heart, lung or kidney condition.
- You have a weakened immune system - for example, because you're having chemotherapy.

Here are some links to further information:

See the NHS website for advice on colds:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/>

See the NHS website for advice on nasal symptoms:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/non-allergic-rhinitis/>



For more advice visit your local pharmacy

Created by: NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB Medicines Optimisation team in partnership with My life Choices.

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