

FACTS ABOUT COLDS

What is a cold?

A cold is a mild infection of the upper respiratory system. There are many different types of viruses that can cause colds. One common cold virus is a rhinovirus. Most young children will have between 6 and 10 colds each year.

What are the symptoms of a cold?

Cold symptoms can include runny and stuffy noses, watery eyes, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, chills, and body aches. Symptoms usually last from 3 to 10 days, but may persist up to 3 weeks. Young children with colds may develop an ear infection secondary to the cold itself. Symptoms of colds and flu (influenza) are quite similar; however the flu is generally worse than the cold and symptoms such as fever, body aches, dry cough, and extreme tiredness are more severe.

How are colds spread?

Colds are easily spread from person to person through the air by coughing or sneezing. Surfaces and hands contaminated with nose, mouth, or throat secretions can also spread cold viruses.

How are colds treated?

There is no cure for the common cold. Measures can be taken to help relieve the symptoms of a cold, which may include getting enough rest and drinking plenty of fluids.

How can the spread of colds be reduced?

1. Make sure adults and children wash hands thoroughly and often. Use plenty of soap and warm water.
2. Use a sanitizing solution ($\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of bleach per quart of cool water) to help minimize germs on surfaces such as tabletops, counters, and toys. Mouthed toys should be washed, rinse, and sanitized between uses by different children. Bathrooms and diaper changing pads should be sanitized with a solution of 1 tablespoon of bleach per quart of cool water.
3. Dispose of facial tissues properly and teach children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Or teach children to cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve, not their hands.
4. Make sure the building is well-ventilated by opening windows or adjusting the air circulation system to allow plenty of fresh air into the building.
5. Assign sleeping mats and bedding to only one child and store these separately when children are in group care. Children should sleep 36" apart or in a head-to-foot arrangement.
6. Avoid touching the eyes, mouth, or nose.

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Exclude from group setting?

Because the virus can be spread even before symptoms appear, exclusion of children with colds is not generally necessary. However, if children cannot comfortably participate in the planned activities, they should be sent home.

Handwashing

Handwashing is one of the primary ways to stop the spread of disease. The following steps are recommended for good handwashing:

1. Turn on warm water.
2. Apply soap to hands.
3. Rub soap over tops and palms of hands and around fingernails. Scrub hands for approximately 20 seconds.
4. Rinse hands with running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.
6. Repeat the process if preparing foods.

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