

Chippenham

Chippenham Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine

Pediatrics

COUGH AND COLD

Your child will probably have more colds, or upper respiratory infections than any other illness. Most children have at least 8-10 colds in the first two years of life. Colds are caused by viruses and can be spread directly by coughing and sneezing or indirectly by touching your nose or coughing into your hand and then touching a healthy person. Viruses and bacteria are two different causes of infection. Antibiotics kill bacteria, NOT viruses. The best treatment is supportive care. Colds may last up to 3 weeks and coughs may last even longer.

Young infants are susceptible to colds as well. They may become fussy during breast or bottle-feeding because they are nasal breathers and it is difficult to breathe and eat with a stuffy nose. In this case, let your child take several breaks during feeding to catch their breath when they are fussy. Furthermore, placing a cool mist vaporizer in the room may help loosen nasal secretions and help improve a restless night's sleep. Mucous can be many different colors and darker/green mucous does not necessarily indicate the need for antibiotics. Antibiotics do not kill viruses.

Symptoms of a cold

- coughing
- sneezing
- runny nose
- nasal congestion
- fever

Treatment

- vaporizer or humidifier
- steam shower
- good hydration
- nasal saline drops and bulb suction out the nose

Children over 6 months of age can be given an over the counter cough and cold medicine every 4-6 hours as needed. Please take a dosage sheet next time you visit the office.

Children under 6 months of age should not be given over the counter cough/cold medicines.

Call our office if:

- fever persists greater than 72 hours
- fever does not respond to the appropriate dose of Tylenol, Motrin or Advil
- labored breathing

Pediatric Advisor 2006.4; Copyright © 2006 McKesson Corporation and/or one of its subsidiaries. All Rights Reserved. Written by B.D. Schmitt, M.D., author of "Your Child's Health," Bantam Books. This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.