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**Upper Respiratory Infections**

Now that your child is in day care, pre-school, or kindergarten, he or she is going to be exposed to lots more germs! Don’t worry! Germs can be good as they build up your child’s immunity and train their bodies to defend against similar germs in the future! Remember, teaching your child to practice good hand washing is the best way to prevent them from becoming ill.

As a parent, it can be hard to determine whether or not your child is suffering from “the common cold” or something a bit more serious. An upper respiratory infection (URI), or the common cold, can be easily treated at home. Colds are viruses, and usually resolve on their own within 10-14 days. However, a cold can also develop into a more serious infection so it is important to know what symptoms to watch for.

**URI symptoms:**

* Runny nose
* Sneezing
* Mild fever (101-102)
* Decreased appetite
* Sore throat
* Cough
* Irritability

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**When to call the doctor:**

* Your child is under 3 months of age
* Fever greater than 102
* Cough becomes worse with shortness of breath, wheezing, difficulty breathing, or chest pain
* Cough is causing your child to vomit
* Sore throat with difficulty swallowing or pus on the tonsils
* Signs of dehydration – decreased urine output, decreased tear production, dry lips/mouth, fatigue
* Yellow or green eye discharge
* Fever lasts more than 3 days
* Cold symptoms last more than 10 days
* Fever that goes away for 24 hours and then returns

Healthy children average 6 colds a year!

**How to treat at home!**

1. Promote rest
2. Increase fluid intake
3. Clear the nasal discharge
   * For infants, suction nose with bulb syringe and saline nose drops
     + This is especially helpful before feeds and before bed
     + Place two drops of saline in each nostril 15-20 minutes before feeding (or bed) then immediately suction with bulb syringe
     + To suction – squeeze the bulb part of the syringe first, gently stick the rubber tip into the nostril, then slowly release the bulb
   * For older children, encourage child to blow their nose
4. For cough, give 1 tsp of honey as natural cough suppressant for children over age 2
5. Give Tylenol or Motrin for fever/pain control (depending on your child’s age)
6. Run a cool-mist humidifier (vaporizer) in your child’s room
   * Set is close to child (but safely beyond their reach)
   * Clean and dry humidifier often to prevent mold contamination
7. Elevate your child’s head to help them breathe better
   * Place blanket **under** one end of the mattress in crib for infants
   * Prop older child up with extra pillows

\*\*\*Over-the-counter cough and cold medicine is **NOT** recommended in children under 6\*\*\*