

FACTS ABOUT

Common Cold

Colds are very common. Most children have several a year. Sometimes, a child with a cold appears very sick, with a high fever, lack of energy, and loss of appetite. Most often a cold results in less severe symptoms, such as coughing, sneezing and a runny nose. Occasionally, a cold can lead to complications, such as ear infections and pneumonia.

Colds are caused by viruses and so cannot be treated with antibiotics. Colds are easily spread from person to person in the following ways:

- through the air, whenever a child with a cold coughs or sneezes.
- through direct contact, whenever a child with a cold touches his or her saliva or runny nose and then touches another child.
- through indirect contact, whenever a child with a cold touches his or her saliva or runny nose and then touches an object, such as a toy or furniture. Another child may then catch the cold by touching the object, because cold germs can live on objects for hours.

Things Parents Can Do

- If your child has a cold, try to wash your own hands and you child's hands after wiping his or her nose, and especially before you prepare or eat food.
- Keep in mind that colds cannot be treated with medication, so there is little your physician can offer. However, other more serious infections can start out as a cold.

Contact your physician if your child shows any of the following signs:

- earache
- fever higher than 39°C (102°F)
- excessive sleepiness
- excessive crankiness or fussiness
- skin rash
- rapid breathing or difficulty breathing
- persistent coughing

Your child may continue attending school if feeling well enough to take part in the activities. In winter, having a cold need not restrict the child from playing outdoors.

Adapted from Canadian Paediatric Society "Well Beings"

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