

Common Colds

Respiratory infections, more commonly referred to as “colds” or “acute respiratory illnesses”, are caused by a virus. There are more than 100 different cold viruses that people are frequently exposed to.

What are the symptoms of a respiratory infection?

Symptoms of a cold includes: Runny nose, sneezing, chills, and tiredness which may last 2-7 days.

How is a cold spread?

The infection is spread through direct contact with respiratory tract secretions (such as saliva, mucous or snot) of infected person/articles, such as toys. It is also spread through the droplets in the air from an infected person coughing or sneezing.

How long is a respiratory infection contagious?

Colds are contagious for 24 hours before symptoms start and for 5 days after symptoms start.

An acute respiratory illness is contagious for up to 7 days, or until the symptoms resolve.

How is a respiratory infection treated?

There is no cure for a cold but it will usually clear up on its own. Because colds are viral infections, antibiotics don't help.

More to know

- Cold viruses can live on toys and other objects for several hours and can be picked up by other children and caregivers.
- Some respiratory viruses can cause serious illnesses, such as croup and bronchiolitis, when they infect infants and toddlers.
- Children should not attend daycare or school until they have been without a fever for 24 hours and are well enough to participate in normal, daily activities.
- Teach individuals to cover their cough with a tissue or to cough or sneeze into their sleeve or elbow and then wash their hands afterward.
- Proper hand hygiene is very important to prevent the spread of infection.



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