



9195 Grant Street, Suite 410
Thornton, CO 80229
Phone: 303-280-2229(BABY
Fax: 303-280-0765

300 Exempla Circle, Suite 470
Lafayette, CO 80026
303-665-6016
303-665-0121

6363 West 120th Avenue, Suite 202
Broomfield, CO 80020
303-460-7116
303-460-8204

www.whg-pc.com

The Common Cold

The common cold causes uncomfortable upper respiratory symptoms that last anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. The most common symptoms are runny nose, sore throat, mild ear pain/fullness, low grade fever (less than 100.5 degrees) and occasionally a cough.

What Causes A Cold?

Colds are caused by exposure to common viruses that typically infect the upper respiratory tract. While the viruses can occur at any time of the year, we see more colds in the fall and winter time as people spend more time in close quarters due to weather conditions. Children go back to school and are exposed to different germs, and in turn bring them home to the family. Viruses can be spread through contact with infected persons' body secretions, including coughs, sneezes, runny noses, and most often, lack of hand washing.

How are Colds Treated?

Viral infections do not respond to antibiotics, but there are some supportive measures that your provider can take to make you more comfortable as your body heals.

- *Use an over the counter sinus rinse twice daily*
 - Sinus rinses clear the mucous from the nose so medication is more effective
 - Cleans allergens and irritants from the nose, reducing their impact
 - Cleans bacteria and viruses from the nose, decreasing infection
 - Decreases swelling in the nose and increases airflow
- *Use an over the counter steroid nasal spray, like Flonase, once daily*
 - Intranasal steroids reduce inflammation in the nasal passages
 - Very little steroid is absorbed systemically from the local administration so it is generally safe to use
 - Use opposite hand to opposite nostril to correctly administer nasal sprays. Take a quick sniff in as you spray the medication into your nose
- *Increase hydration to 2 – 3 liters of water per day*
 - This is especially helpful if you have thick mucous because staying well hydrated can help to thin secretions
 - If you have a low grade fever, your body needs more fluids to prevent dehydration
 - Avoid dairy products; these can thicken secretions
- *Get adequate rest*
 - Aim for 7 – 8 hours of sleep per night, especially while fighting a cold
- *Use over the counter decongestants and pain relievers as necessary*

- Over the counter decongestants are helpful for the short term relief of nasal and sinus congestion, but can have side effects such as increasing blood pressure and heartrate, so talk to your provider about what medications are safe for you to use.
- Tylenol and ibuprofen help to relieve headaches, ear pain and sore throats. Take the lowest effective dose for your symptoms. Never take more than 3000mg of Tylenol in 24 hours, and do not take ibuprofen if you are pregnant.
- *Cough Medications*
 - If your cough is bothersome enough or significantly affecting your sleep, your provider may prescribe a cough medication with ingredients for cough suppression. Some of these medications have codeine in them, which will make you drowsy. You should not drive, operate machinery, or make important decisions while on these medications, and they should be only used as necessary for the shortest amount of time possible.
 - Some cough medications can increase blood pressure. If you have hypertension, contact your provider to determine what over the counter medication is appropriate for you.
- **COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE!**
 - Protect those around you from catching your cold – use a tissue to sneeze into, use the inside crook of your elbow to cover your cough or sneeze, (not your hand!), and avoid going to crowded places
 - If you are traveling, take sealable plastic baggies with you to place your dirty tissues in to avoid the spread of your cold to those who may be cleaning up after you.
- **WASH YOUR HANDS!**
 - Clean hands help prevent the spread of disease
 - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or if soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
 - Wash your hands after you use the restroom, after you cough or sneeze, before and after food preparation/meals, and more frequently if you are in public places.

When to Call Your Provider

You may need to contact the office and be seen if you develop any of the following:

- Fever greater than 101 degrees
- Productive cough or difficulty taking deep breaths
- Wheezing
- Worsening symptoms despite over the counter treatments
- Loss of taste and smell with accompanying sinus pressure and pain
- Rash
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Neck pain or stiffness

Remember, colds can last for 1 -2 weeks, sometimes longer, and the majority will not respond to antibiotics. If you develop any of the above symptoms, however, a bacterial component may be suspected. As always, contact your provider and make an appointment if you have any questions or concerns.