

Pediatrics, P.C.

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The Common Cold (Upper Respiratory Infections)

The common cold is an upper respiratory infection that inflames the lining of the nose and throat. For five to ten days your child's nose may be runny or stuffy and his eyes may be red and watery. He may sneeze, cough, experience aches, pains, or have a mild fever.

Colds are caused by viruses. They are passed from one individual to another by coughs, sneezes, or direct contact by sharing objects such as utensils or handkerchiefs. Colds are extremely contagious, particularly during the first day or two of the infection when many of the symptoms may not yet be evident. Additionally, colds tend to be more prevalent in the fall and winter when children are in school and are in closer contact with each other and the cold viruses. Most children will experience between 6 to 8 colds per year.

RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)

RSV infects almost all children at least once before they are 2 years old. RSV infection occurs most often from late fall to early spring. Most illness occurs between October and April. RSV is highly contagious. The virus can live for several hours on surfaces such as a countertop or on unwashed hands. It is spread by direct or close physical contact or through contact with a contaminated surface.

For most healthy children, the symptoms of RSV resemble a cold and may include runny nose, cough, and low grade fever. However, signs of a more serious infection may include difficult or rapid breathing, wheezing, irritability, restlessness, and poor appetite. Wheezing is caused by the narrowing of the smallest airways in the lungs. Overall, the wheezing lasts approximately one week and the cough can linger for up to two weeks. Treatment may include respiratory treatments. Saline nose drops help to thin thick nasal secretions. Call immediately if your child's breathing becomes difficult or wheezing becomes severe. A nasal secretion test may be done to determine if your child has the RSV infection.

Croup

Croup is an inflammation of the voice box (larynx) and windpipe (trachea). When a child has croup, the airway just below the vocal cords becomes swollen and narrow. This makes breathing noisy and difficult. Some children get croup often with respiratory illnesses.

Children are most likely to get croup between 6 months and 3 years of age. After age 3, it is not as common because the windpipe is larger, so swelling is less likely to get in the way of breathing. Croup can occur at any time of the year, but it is more common between October and March.

Treating Croup: If your child wakes up in the middle of the night with croup, take her into the bathroom. Close the door and turn the shower on the hottest setting to let the bathroom steam up. Sit in the steamy bathroom with your child. Within 15 to 20 minutes, the warm, moist air should help her breathing. A barky cough may continue. For at least two to three nights following, you should use a cold-water vaporizer or humidifier in your child's room. It is not uncommon for another attack to occur. If this occurs, repeat the steam treatment in the bathroom. If steam does not work, take your child outdoors for a few minutes. Inhaling moist, cool night air may loosen up the air passages so that she can breathe more freely. If these measures do not help, consult your pediatrician about other options.

If your child's breathing becomes a serious struggle, call for emergency medical services.

Antibiotics, which treat bacteria, are not helpful for croup because the problem is almost always caused by a virus or allergy. Cough syrups do not affect the larynx or trachea where the infection is located and therefore are of little use. Cough syrups may also interfere with your child coughing up the mucus from the infection

HEALTHY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

Preschoolers

- I will clean up my toys.
- I will brush my teeth twice a day and wash my hands after going to the bathroom and before eating.
- I won't tease dogs - even friendly ones. I will avoid being bitten by keeping my fingers and face away from their mouths.

Kids, 5 to 12 years-old

- I will drink milk and water, and limit soda and fruit drinks.
- I will try to find a sport (like basketball or soccer) or an activity (like playing tag, jumping rope, dancing or riding my bike) that I like and do it at least three times a week!
- I will always wear a helmet when bicycling.
- I will wear my seat belt every time I get in a car. I'll sit in the back seat and use a booster seat until I am tall enough to use a lap/shoulder seat belt.
- I'll be nice to other kids. I'll be friendly to kids who need friends - like someone who is shy, or is new to my school.

Kids, 13 years-old and up

- I will take care of my body through physical activity and nutrition.
- I will choose non-violent television shows and video games. I will spend only one to two hours each day - at the most - on these activities.
- I will help out in my community - through volunteering, working with community groups, or by joining a group that helps people in need.
- When I feel angry or stressed out, I will take a break and find constructive ways to deal with the stress such as exercising, reading, writing in a journal, or discussing my problem with a parent or friend.
- When faced with a difficult decision, I will talk with an adult about my choices.
- I will be careful about whom I choose to date and I will always treat the other person with respect and without intimidation or violence.
- I will resist peer pressure to try drugs and alcohol.



New Year = New Insurance Cards

The New Year may have brought changes to your insurance.
Please remember to update our records when you receive new insurance cards.
Thank you.