

Colds

It is 'cold' season again! Colds are the most common cause of illness in people. Colds are caused by a virus. There are about 200 types of viruses that cause colds which is why you can't be immunised against a cold.

Colds are most common in winter not because of the cold weather but because in winter people spend more time inside and in closer contact with each other and are more likely to be infected.

How to manage a cold:

There is no cure for a cold. Colds are caused by viruses and so antibiotics will not work to cure a cold. Symptoms can be relieved in various ways:

- ✓ Panadol is a good safe medication for fever and headache relief
- ✓ Warm drinks will ease sore throats and mouths
- ✓ Nasal sprays may ease blocked noses or a swipe of 'vicks' under the nose
- ✓ Increased water intake is very important.
- ✓ Rest and early nights. Children don't need bed rest with a cold.
*Never give children under 18y.o. Aspirin as it can cause Reye's syndrome which can be fatal.
- ✓ Sleeping on two pillows can help with night coughs and breathing
- ✓ A humidifier in the bedroom at night can help keep secretion moist

How to reduce the spread of a cold:

Cold viruses can survive in the air and on surfaces for up to 3 hours.

- ✓ Frequent hand washing after nose blowing essential
- ✓ Teach children to cough and sneeze into their elbows never to cover their nose or mouths with their hands.
- ✓ Tissues should be placed in a bin or a ziplock bag to then be thrown away

Colds usually last for about a week but people are most contagious at day 3-4 after the first symptoms appear which is when the cold is usually at its worst. This is a good time stay at home if possible.

When to see the doctor:

Generally it is not necessary to see a doctor for a cold, however it may be advised if your child

- ✓ Cold continues for more than a week
- ✓ Has a temperature over 39°C or a temperature that doesn't respond to Panadol.
- ✓ Has difficulty breathing or a wheeze develops – increased mucous in the airways causes narrowing of the airways and can cause asthma. This is more likely if your child already suffers asthma.
- ✓ Complains of ear ache, chest or stomach pain
- ✓ Refuses to drink fluids
- ✓ Vomits frequently

Where to get help:

If you need advice about your child's health call

NURSE-ON-CALL 1300 60 60 24 or

for medical emergencies 000

*Reference: Better Health Channel, NPS medicinewise.