

# WHAT IS THE COMMON COLD?

A common cold is a **VIRAL** infection in the upper respiratory tract (your nose or throat). A common cold is usually harmless, and will go away with time. Antibiotics will **NOT** cure or shorten the length of a common cold.

## HOW TO PREVENT THE COMMON COLD?

No vaccine has been developed for the common cold, which can be caused by many different viruses. There are some common-sense precautions to slow the spread of cold viruses:

- Steer clear of colds. Avoid close, prolonged contact with anyone who has a cold.
- Wash your hands. Clean your hands thoroughly and often. Scrub for 20 seconds.
- Cough and Sneeze Technique: Use a tissue whenever possible to sneeze or cough into. If one is not available, use the bend of your elbow. This will prevent the spread of the cold to others by avoiding the use of your hand.
- Over-the-counter medications will **NOT** cure a common cold or make it go away faster. However, they may alleviate or lessen some of the symptoms.



# Your campus clinic and pharmacy



**CLINIC:** 701-231-7331  
**PHARMACY:** 701-231-7332  
**FAX:** 701-231-6132

18th Street and Centennial Boulevard  
Dept 5150, PO Box 6050  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

## Student Health Portal

[www.ndsu.edu/studenthealthservice](http://www.ndsu.edu/studenthealthservice)

### SOURCES:

1. Common Cold. Accessed 12/31/2014
2. "Common Cold". National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Accessed December 31, 2014 at <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/commonCold/Pages/cause.aspx>
3. [www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/commoncold](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/commoncold)

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## COLD SURVIVAL GUIDE:

# WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GET SICK?



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# HOME TECHNIQUES FOR ALLEVIATING THE COMMON COLD

## DRINK LOTS OF FLUIDS:

- Water, juice, clear broth, warm lemon water, hot fluids or electrolyte beverages are all good choices. They help replenish fluids lost during mucus production or fever. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which can cause dehydration. Avoid cigarette smoke, which can aggravate respiratory symptoms. Chicken soup may help relieve symptoms.

## GET SOME REST:

- Stay home from work or class if you have a fever, bad cough or are drowsy after the medications. This will give you a chance to rest while reducing the potential of infecting others.

## SOOTHE YOUR THROAT:

- Lozenges or hard candy, pain relievers, hot liquids, ice chips, popsicles or gargling with salt water can help. Recipe for salt water is: 1/4 - 1/2 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup warm water.

## USE SALINE NASAL SPRAY:

- Try saline nasal spray to help relieve nasal congestion. It's readily available and is effective, safe and nonirritating.

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# WHEN TO SEE A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER:

## FOR ADULTS — SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF YOU HAVE:

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Significantly swollen glands making it hard to swallow
- Worsening symptoms after you have improved
- Symptoms lasting more than 10 days



IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CALL THE NDSU STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE AT 701-231-7331.

# OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS COMMONLY USED DURING A COLD

## PAIN RELIEVERS:

- Ibuprofen (such as Advil or Motrin) and naproxen sodium (Aleve): Works on fever, aches/pains and it's also good for swelling — take with food as these can cause stomach irritation.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and paracetamol (Panadol): Works on fever and aches/pains. Follow package instructions to help prevent potential liver problems. Maximum dose for acetaminophen products, including combination products, is 3,000 mg in 24 hours.

## DECONGESTANT NASAL SPRAYS:

- Afrin: Do not use decongestant nasal sprays for more than two to three days. Continued use can make congestion worse, causing rebound congestion and increasing symptoms.

## COUGH SYRUPS:

- Dextromethorphan (Robatussin DM, Delsym): Provides temporary relief of cough, but can cause drowsiness.

## EXPECTORANT:

- Guaifenesin (Mucinex): Used to help break up chest congestion by increasing the volume and reducing the viscosity of secretions. May be combined with other products such as dextromethorphan.

## DECONGESTANTS:

- Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed): Sold behind the counter at pharmacies and requires a valid driver's license to purchase. Sudafed PE doesn't require an ID to purchase, but is not as effective as original Sudafed at alleviating nasal congestion. These medications can interfere with restful sleep if taken late in the day.

## COMBINATION PRODUCTS:

- Dayquil, Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold and Tylenol Cold Multi-Symptom: Contain multiple products in them. Read the ingredients because too much of some products can be dangerous.

## SUPPLEMENTS:

- There is no evidence that Vitamin C or Echinacea can help with cold symptoms.