WHAT IS A VIRAL ILLNESS?

The majority of illnesses are caused by a virus entering the body. There is no cure for a viral infection. Most symptoms will peak in intensity at three to five days from the onset of illness and will gradually improve. Symptoms typically are gone within 10 to 14 days.

Symptoms of viral illness include nasal congestion and drainage, sneezing, sore throat, cough, mild fever (less than 100.4 degrees), feeling sweaty and chilled, headache, body aches and a general feeling of being unwell.

Over-the-counter medications will NOT cure a viral illness or make it go away faster. However, they may relieve or reduce some symptoms. Antibiotics are not indicated in treatment of viral illness.

HOW TO PREVENT A VIRAL ILLNESS:

• Get adequate sleep (more than seven hours per night).
• Avoid close, prolonged contact with anyone who has an illness.
• Wash your hands thoroughly and often. Use hand sanitizer throughout the day.
• Use a tissue whenever possible to cover your mouth when sneezing or coughing. If one is not available, use the bend of your elbow. Avoid the use of your hand.
• Avoid sharing personal items (such as water bottles).
• Get your yearly influenza vaccination.
SELF-CARE TIPS:

Handwashing
Frequent handwashing reduces the spread of viral and bacterial germs to others. Scrub hands vigorously and clean under fingernails with soap for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your hands to your face throughout the day.

Drink Fluids
Water, juice, clear broth, warm lemon water with honey, hot beverages or low-sugar sports drinks are all good choices. They help replenish fluids lost during mucous production or fever. Avoid alcohol and caffeine as these can cause dehydration.

Stay Home to Rest
Stay home from work or class if you have a fever over 100.4°F (38°C), bad cough or are drowsy after using medications. This will give you a chance to rest while reducing the potential of infecting others. You may return to work or school when you feel recovered and have been without a fever for 24 hours without using medications to reduce your temperature.

Avoid Smoking and Vaping
These products can aggravate respiratory symptoms.

Purchase a Thermometer
It is important to have this to monitor your temperature.

Zinc Lozenges
The use of zinc gluconate lozenges (available over the counter) taken every two hours when symptoms begin can reduce duration of illness.

OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) MEDICATIONS FOR SYMPTOM RELIEF:

Fever/Pain/Headache:
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol or Paracetamol)
  1,000 mg every six hours
- Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin)
  400-800 mg every six hours with food

Cough:
- Dextromethorphan (Delsym or Robitussin)
  Take as directed per box. May cause drowsiness.
- Guaifenesin (Mucinex)
  Take as directed per box. May help make cough more productive.
- Honey
  One to two teaspoons with warm water or tea

Nasal Congestion:
- Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed)
  Take as directed per box
- Oxymetazoline (Afrin) Nasal Spray
  Two to three sprays in each nostril every 12 hours. Do not use for more than five days in a row.
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)
  Take as directed per box
- Nasal Saline Washes/Neti Pot
  Use as directed per box

Sore Throat:
- Hard candy, Cepacol lozenges, warm liquids, ice chips or popsicles
- Salt-water gargle. Mix a half teaspoon salt with one cup of warm water. May use several times a day.

SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE IF YOU HAVE:
• Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
• Swollen glands in your neck making it hard to swallow
• Wheezing, chest pain or shortness of breath
• Worsening symptoms after you have improved or symptoms lasting more than 10-14 days
• Rash associated with illness

SERVICES AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS:

Medical Clinic
Medical doctors (MD) and nurse practitioners (NP) are available to provide primary care, including care for acute illness. Common visits at the clinic include upper respiratory illness, annual exams, STI screening, mental health, birth control, as well as other services you would find at a primary care clinic.

Pharmacy
A full-service pharmacy is located inside the clinic. You can send prescriptions to this pharmacy from an outside clinic or our providers may send your prescriptions here after a visit so there is no need to travel off campus. Over-the-counter medications also are available for purchase at the pharmacy.

Laboratory and X-ray Services
Full-service laboratory and X-ray services are located within the clinic. These services may be needed during a medical visit.

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