

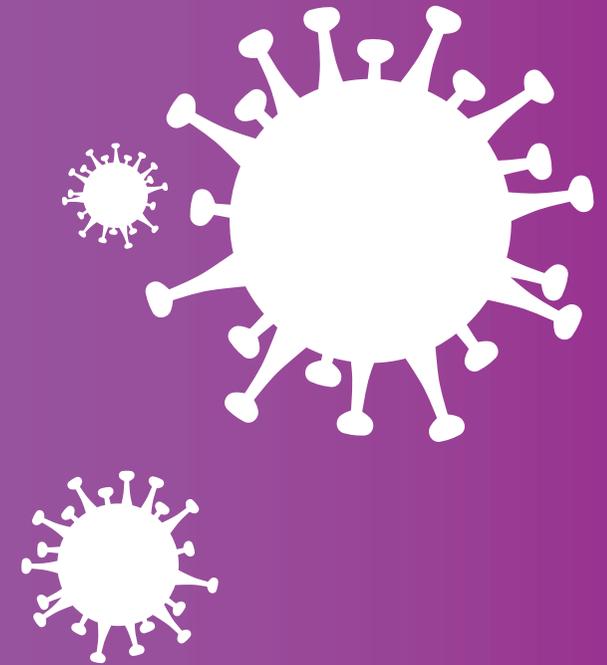


MEDICAL MUTUAL®

**When you or your child has a cold or the flu, you want to do the right things to feel better. Did you know the right treatment for a cold or the flu does not include taking antibiotics? Viruses cause most colds and flus, and antibiotics do not fight viruses. They just fight bacteria.**

**Using antibiotics when they're not needed can make bacteria adapt to the antibiotic. This might mean the antibiotic is less able to fight a true bacterial infection or even make it useless in the future.**

**How can you stop this from happening? Take antibiotics only when prescribed by your healthcare provider.**



**Cold and Flu**



MEDICAL MUTUAL®  
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## Preventing a Cold or the Flu

The typical child has four to eight colds a year, while the typical adult has three to five colds a year.

You can help prevent getting a cold or the flu by:

- Washing your hands a lot. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Time yourself by singing “Happy Birthday” twice while washing.)
- Teaching children not to touch their nose, eyes and mouth.
- Making sure you cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Try to cough or sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of your elbow.
- Limiting exposure to others who are ill.
- Following current guidelines for getting a flu shot. Everyone 6 months and older should get the flu vaccine every year. Ask your doctor or health provider what is right for you.

## Treating a Cold or the Flu at Home

Most colds get better within a week. Flu symptoms, and coughs from the flu, can last up to three weeks.

Here are some ways to feel better at home:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Get plenty of rest. Children especially need extra time for sleep and naps.
- Use over-the-counter medicines such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen or aspirin to help with fever and aching muscles. (Note: No one age 20 or younger should take aspirin to treat a cold or flu. If you or your child takes an over-the-counter medicine, be sure to read and follow the label’s directions.)

Here are some things you can use or take to help with cold or flu symptoms.

- Popsicles, ice chips or honey can soothe sore throats and coughs.
- A cool-mist humidifier or saline nose drops or spray can relieve stuffy noses.
- Chicken noodle soup can help hydrate and ease symptoms.

## Seeing Your Doctor or Health Provider

Contact your provider if you have symptoms like:

- A hard time breathing or swallowing.
- Coughing and wheezing with extreme tiredness.
- A fever that also includes a rash, ear pain or sore throat with swollen neck glands.
- More than 10 days of coughing and/or yellow or green nasal mucous that isn’t getting better.

If your provider does prescribe an antibiotic, make sure you follow his or her orders and also the directions on the bottle. Take all the medicine, even if you or your child feel better. Don’t give your medicine to anybody else. Don’t save any medicine for a future illness — use it all.

## For More Information

Log into My Health Plan and click Resources & Tools then Health Resource Center. Enter “colds and flu” in the search box.

You can also visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Enter the words “flu” or “common cold” in the search box on the home page.