



Cold and Influenza

A cold is an acute inflammation of the upper respiratory tract involving the nose and throat. Symptoms usually come on suddenly. The throat is frequently irritated ~ the nose runs, there is some sneezing, and a feeling of discomfort. There may be headache, loss of smell or taste, vague aches, and occasionally a cough occurs. Later the nose becomes obstructed, necessitating constant blowing. The voice may become either weak or husky.

Influenza is a viral respiratory infection that usually occurs in the winter months. Symptoms appear suddenly and include chills, fever, headache, and aches in the back, muscles, and joints. Weakness, excessive fatigue, and sweating are common. There may be mild cold symptoms such as runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, and dry or hacking cough. The acute phase of the illness runs 4-5 days, but fatigue can persist for weeks.

Since we have no medications to destroy a virus, treatment involves controlling the symptoms and keeping yourself comfortable during illness.

Because many medications pass through the placenta during pregnancy, we generally suggest you avoid using any drugs. However, during illness it may be necessary to use some medications to control fever and other symptoms. Those mentioned below are used frequently during pregnancy and believed to be safe for you and your baby if used in moderation and for short periods of time. Never take more medicine than is directed on the package. Antibiotics are not usually helpful because cold and flu are viral. They are prescribed only if a secondary bacterial infection occurs. If antibiotics are needed, we will prescribe one that is safe for use during pregnancy.

Treatment of Cold and Flu

1. *Increase rest*
 - Bed rest makes sense if the cold or flu is severe
 - Fatigue always worsens disease
2. *Increase fluid intake*
 - Greater than 2 quarts per day
3. *Fever*
 - Try to keep your temperature below 100.4°
 - Light, loose clothing allows heat to escape from your body
 - Wrapping up in a blanket or sweater retains your body heat
 - A lukewarm bath may help lower your body temperature
 - Use of Tylenol or other acetaminophen can be used according to the package directions
4. *Congestion*
 - Extra humidity can relieve nasal stuffiness
 - Decongestants may help dry up nasal secretions and relieve pressure in the ears
 - Sudafed, Actifed, or Tylenol Sinus are fine to use
5. *Cough*
 - Prudent use of Robitussin DM cough medicines is recommended as needed.