

HERE IT IS AGAIN.....COLD SEASON

The “Common Cold” is an infection of the head and chest caused by a virus. It can affect your upper respiratory tract. This includes your nose, mouth, throat, sinuses, ears, windpipe (trachea), voice box (larynx), bronchial airways, and the tube between your middle ear and your nose.

It is spread person to person by personal contact such as shaking hands, sharing the same glass, and kissing, as well as by coughing and sneezing. There are over 200 types of viruses that cause the common cold. Bacteria do not cause the common cold. Antibiotics will not help. In fact, antibiotics can cause a rash when they interact with some of the viruses, and the side effects of the antibiotics can cause other problems such as yeast infections and diarrhea.

The symptoms are typically: runny nose (this can be clear, yellowish, and even green appearing), watery eyes, sneezing, cough, sinus congestion, muscle aches, headaches, and fever. Loss of appetite is very common, especially in children. As long as your child can take fluids by mouth, there is generally no cause for alarm.

All of these can be treated symptomatically, using over the counter medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen for fever and aches, as well as pseudophedrine for the nasal congestion. If you are not sure if these are appropriate for your child (for example, age less than 12 months or if they have other medical conditions requiring chronic medicine use), please contact your health care provider. Children should NOT receive aspirin. Aspirin can cause a severe problem with the liver called Reye’s Syndrome.

You are more susceptible to “catching a cold” if you: use tobacco, do not eat well, if you are chronically fatigued, suffer from chronic stress (physical or emotional), or if you live or work in crowded conditions. Children in daycare settings are particularly susceptible because they are constantly in close contact with each other.

Colds generally last between 7 and 14 days. Occasionally, the cough can last for a bit longer. Make an appointment to see your provider if: coughing produces green or grey phlegm, white or yellow spots on the tonsils, fevers over 100.4 that do not respond to ibuprofen or acetaminophen (multiple doses are ok, even for kids), skin rash, ear pain,

stiff neck, or if the child does not act like him/herself. The child will act sick, but they should be able to recognize mom and dad or show interest in a favorite toy.

You can help yourself be more comfortable during this time by getting enough sleep and limiting your activity, drinking plenty of non-caffeinated fluids, and using humidifiers to moisturize the air, especially at night.