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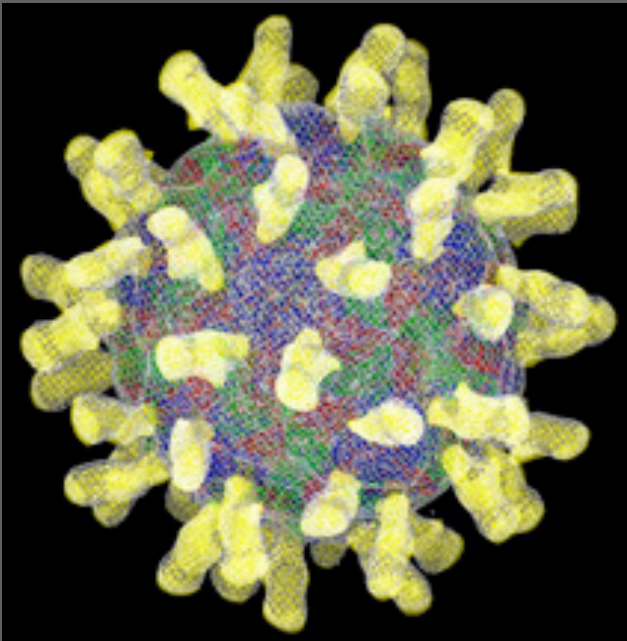
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# Cold and Flu Care



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Yale Health

# The Common Cold



- Not a single entity
- Caused by members of 5 families of viruses
- Most commonly;
  - Rhinoviruses
  - Coronaviruses
  - Influenza viruses

# Common Cold is COMMON!

- American adults average 2–4 colds/year
- Children average 6–8 colds/year
- Nearly one billion colds/year in US
- Results in over 50 million inappropriate antibiotic prescriptions/year.



# Epidemiology

- Main reservoir of viruses is young children
- Crowding of children in schools and daycare a key factor in seasonal outbreaks
- Seasonal pattern of viruses
- Chilling of volunteers in cold studies NOT associated with illness

# Spread

- Two main methods are direct contact and aerosols
- Peak of infectivity during days 2 and 3 before symptoms
- Hand-washing and minimizing direct physical contact may help
- Quarantine of no value



# Handwashing Quiz

You should wash your hands:

- a) Before touching your eyes, nose, and/or mouth.*
- b) Before eating or handling food.*
- c) When hands are contaminated after sneezing or coughing.*
- d) After using the toilet.*
- e) After touching items like doorknobs and handrails.*

# Handwashing Quiz

**All** are correct answers, but sometimes we ignore this and our hands go unwashed.

When done correctly, handwashing is an easy personal hygiene practice

Handwashing prevents the spread of disease



# Proper handwashing

**It's easy!**

- Wet hands under running water.
- Apply soap and rub hands together to make a soapy lather.
- Out of the water, rub your palms, backs of hands, between fingers, backs of fingers, thumbs, finger tips, and wrists. Do this for at least 20 seconds (sing "Happy Birthday" – when the song is done, so are you).
- Rinse hands thoroughly under running water.
- Dry hands thoroughly with either a clean cotton towel or paper towel.
- Use your towel to turn off the faucet.

# Do alcohol gel hand sanitizers work?

*American J. of Infection Control. 2000; 28: 340-346.*

- Case Study
  - 5 individual school districts, 16 schools, and more than 6,000 students in 4 states
  - dispensers were installed next to the door inside every classroom for easy access when entering and leaving the room
  - control: in the set of control schools, sanitizers were not used at all

- Usage by students
  - 1.0 mL to 2.4 mL per student (1.5–5 uses)
  - Some reports indicate that after 4 uses, hands should be washed
- Results
  - schools that used sanitizer showed a 20% reduction in absenteeism due to illness ( $p < 0.05$ )
  - 10% decrease in teacher absenteeism

# What does this tell us?

- When your hands are visibly soiled, they should be washed with soap and warm water
- In other instances, an alcohol-based handrub (like Purell) can be used
  - Apply to palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry

# Symptoms/Clinical Course

- Incubation period between 24 and 72 hours
- Runny nose, congestion, headache, sore throat, cough, sneezing
- Fevers more common in children
- Rapid onset of symptoms with escalation in first 3 days

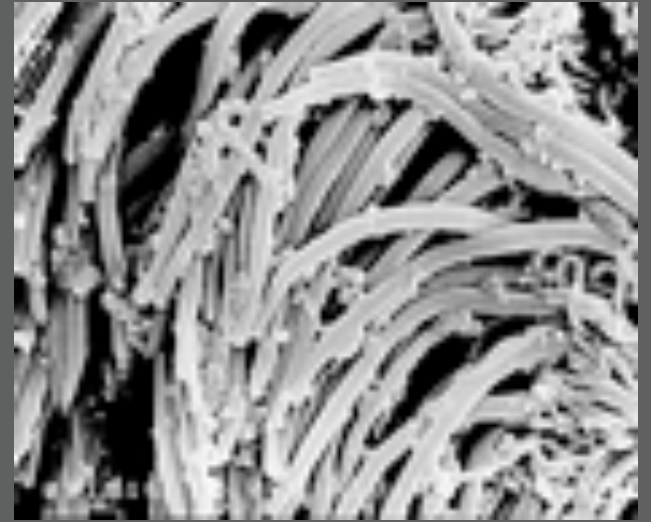
# Symptoms/Clinical Course

- Median duration is 7 days
- 25% of colds last up to 14 days
- Smokers may experience increased duration and severity of symptoms because the smoke irritates the mucus membranes

# Complications

- **RARE** (less than 5% of cases)
- Caused by bacterial super-infection of otherwise sterile sites
- Sinusitis, otitis media (middle ear infections), bronchitis

# The Flu



- Seasonal outbreaks
- May resemble common cold, but symptoms also include fevers, aches, and lethargy Dangerous complications in infants, elderly and people with certain chronic diseases (heart, lung, diabetes, HIV)
- Similar treatments as common cold



# How do you treat the flu?

- Time is the best healer
- Rest, fluids, avoidance of alcohol
- Sleep, management of stress



# Symptomatic Treatment

- Decongestants
- Treatment of fever
- Fluids
- Lozenges, gargles
- Chicken soup?



# Recommended Over-The-Counter (OTC) Medications

	Drug	Therapeutic Effects
Cough Preparations	Syarol Tablet	Loosen mucus and Cough Suppressant
	Robitussin Syrup	Expectorant to loosen mucus
	Robitussin DM Syrup	Loosen mucus and Cough Suppressant
Fever, Head and Muscle	Acetaminophen tablets	Anti-pyretic for fever, analgesic for headache and muscle aches
	Ibuprofen tablets	Anti-pyretic for fever, analgesic for headache and muscle aches
Itchy, watery, burning	Naphcon A eye drops	Ocular decongestant and antihistamine
	Chlorpheniramine tablets	Oral antihistamine

# Recommended OTC Medications

	Drug	Therapeutic Effects
Nasal Congestion	Actifed Nasal Spray	Decongestant and antihistamine. Dries nasal secretions.
	Chlorpheniramine tablets	Oral antihistmine Dries nasal secretions.
	Afrin Nasal Spray	Nasal Decongestant
	Sudodrin tablets	Nasal Decongestant
Sore Throat	Sepasoothe lozenge	Throat Anesthetic
	Halls Cough Drops	Throat Anesthetic

# *What about antibiotics?*

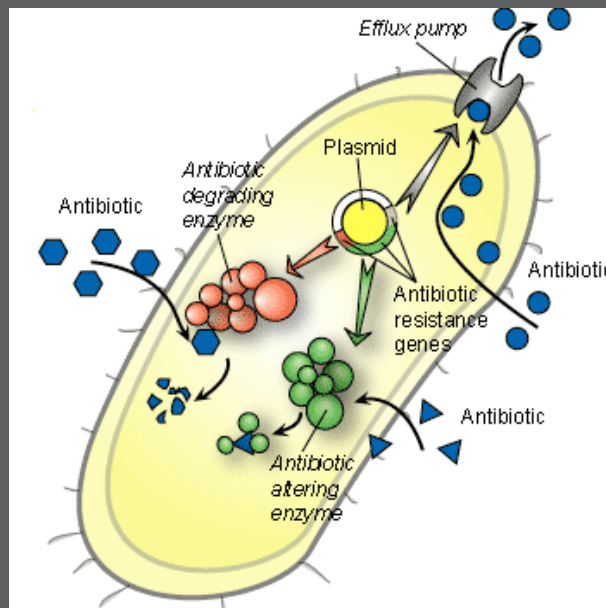


# Patients' Reasons for Requesting Antibiotics

- Too busy to get sick
- Colds “always” progress to something bad
- Previous doctors “always” prescribed antibiotics

# Top Reasons for Avoiding Antibiotics

- They do NOT work for viral illnesses
- Side effects/allergic reactions
- Development of resistance over time



# Infection

## BACTERIAL vs VIRAL

Do you know the difference?

Viral infections (such as a common cold or influenza) cannot be cured with antibiotics.





2010 Flu Shot Clinics:  
<http://yalehealth.yale.edu/>

Flu Shot Clinic at IC, 421 Temple  
(internationals only):  
Wednesday, November 17  
11:30am to 2:30pm