



Common Questions

We are committed to providing you and your family with the medical services you need. Our commitment extends to those health conditions that may not require a visit to your doctor—such as colds or the flu. The more you know about these conditions, the better your chances of treating the symptoms successfully. Keeping this in mind, we encourage early and appropriate self-treatment, since it can usually lessen the chances of your cold or the flu from keeping you down.



Clearing up your questions about colds, flu, and allergies

Colds, the flu, and allergies share many of the same symptoms, such as a runny nose and nasal congestion. However, each condition has symptoms that are specific to itself. The flu differs from colds in that the flu is often accompanied by fever and body aches, in addition to runny nose, sore throat, nasal congestion and coughing. Allergies differ from colds and the flu in that allergies are usually

accompanied by itchy eyes and nose, along with sneezing.

The chart on page 2 can help you distinguish easily between these conditions. The key symptoms that are specific to each condition are highlighted in the first section. The second section includes nonprescription medications and the symptoms that they treat.

Commonly asked questions about self-treatment for cold and flu symptoms

Question: When are nonprescription medications appropriate?

Answer: Nonprescription medications are often appropriate for the early self-treatment of a variety of minor conditions. Proper early self-treatment can usually bring relief from the symptoms of a cold or flu.

Question: Shouldn't I take prescription antibiotics for my cold or the flu?

Answer: Unfortunately, many people think they should go to the doctor and get a prescription for an antibiotic at the first sign of a cold or flu. However, antibiotics typically have no effect on colds or flu, which almost always are caused by viruses. Antibiotics are effective only against bacteria. Not only are antibiotics ineffective for these conditions—taking unnecessary antibiotics can lead to the development of antibiotic resistance. This resistance makes the antibiotic ineffective against a bacterial infection that you might get sometime in the future.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

The chart below lists common symptoms of a cold, the flu, and allergies.

COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES
Runny nose	Runny nose	Runny nose
Nasal congestion	Nasal congestion	Nasal congestion
Sore throat	Sore throat	Sneezing
Coughing	Coughing	Itchy nose
Sneezing	Sneezing	Itchy, watery eyes
	Fever/chills	
	Body aches	

WHAT SHOULD YOU TAKE?

The chart below shows the various types of nonprescription drugs and the symptoms they treat.

MEDICATION	SYMPTOM
Decongestant	Nasal congestion
Antihistamine	Sneezing Runny nose Itchy nose Itchy, watery eyes
Antitussive	Coughing
Analgesic	Sore throat Fever Body aches

IF YOU ARE TAKING PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION, CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST.

Unfortunately, there is no “quick cure” for these conditions—it usually takes between 1 to 2 weeks for your body to fight off the viral infection that is causing the cold or flu. However, proper self-treatment with nonprescription products is one way—and should be the first way—to relieve the symptoms of colds and the flu. If your cold or flu symptoms last longer than 7 days or worsen, see your doctor.

Question: What nonprescription products should I take for my cold or the flu?

Answer: There are over 300,000 different nonprescription products available, which you can take to relieve specific symptoms.

Question: Why can you trust non-prescription products?

Answer: OTCs continue to grow in popularity as people choose to take more control over their health care and self-treat minor health problems. Today there are more than 400 medical conditions, occurring millions of times every year, having symptoms that are treatable with OTCs. In addition, there are more than 300,000 OTC products, some of which are former prescription medicines, that have been proven safe and effective. In fact, OTC products account for nearly 60% of all the medication consumed in the US every year. The United States Food and Drug

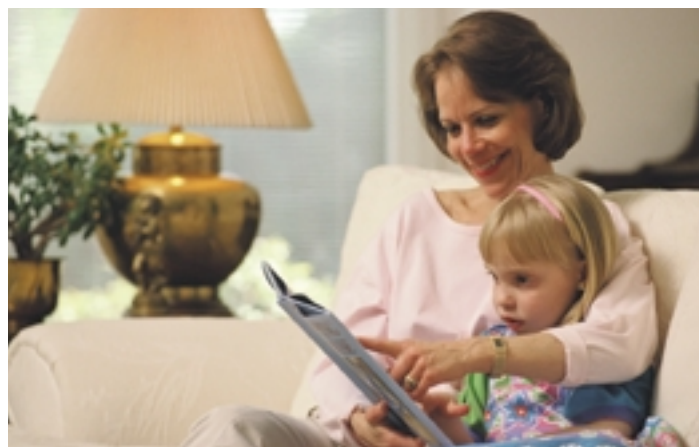
Administration (FDA) regulates over-the-counter medications for their safety and efficacy.

Remember, always read and follow label directions of any medication, whether prescription or nonprescription. When in doubt, or if you have any questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

General tips for treating symptoms of colds and the flu

On the days your cold and flu symptoms are the worst, medical experts recommend that you get plenty of rest. Rest helps your body fight a virus.

Whether it is a cold or the flu, doctors recommend drinking plenty of fluids. The flu is accompanied by



HEALTH INFORMATION RESOURCES

If you would like more information on allergies and asthma, you can call the following organizations.



**Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America**
(800) 7-ASTHMA



American Lung Association
(800) LUNG-USA

fever, which causes you to perspire and lose fluids from your body. To keep from becoming dehydrated, it is important that you keep putting fluids back into your system on a regular basis.

Colds and the flu often cause you to lose your appetite, so you may not feel like eating much. Stick to liquids at first, but try to eat small portions of bland, starchy foods (like cooked cereal or a baked potato).

Fighting the battle before it begins

Cold prevention

Viruses that cause the common cold are spread from person to person through coughing, sneezing, and other methods of coming in contact with germs. While there are many suggested ways to prevent getting a cold, including increasing your intake of vitamin C, there has been no reliable evidence that any of these is a sure-fire method. Today, the best preventive measure you can take against the



cold is to maintain good hygiene—wash your hands regularly, keep your surroundings clean, and be careful not to infect yourself by touching your fingers to your eyes or mouth.

Flu prevention

Every year there are new kinds of viruses that cause influenza, and each year the best way to protect yourself against them is to receive a flu shot in the fall. This is especially important for people who are at high risk of developing complications from the flu—the very young and old, and people with heart, lung, or nervous system diseases. Those who are likely to be exposed to the flu, such as residents of nursing homes and healthcare workers, should also have a flu shot.

Defend yourself against the flu and colds by keeping your immune system in good shape with adequate sleep and a healthy diet.

The logo for Bristol Park Medical. The words "BRISTOL PARK" are in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below this, the word "MEDICAL" is written in white, uppercase letters on a dark grey rectangular background.

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