

# Colds (Baby)

## Definition

- The common cold is a viral infection of the nose and throat.
- Main symptoms are a runny nose and sore throat.
- Family members or close friends have same symptoms.
- Medical names are viral rhinitis, upper respiratory infection, URI.

## Health Information

### Symptoms

- Runny or stuffy nose. The nasal discharge may be clear, cloudy, yellow or green.
- A sore throat can be the first sign.
- Fever can also be present.
- At times, the child may also have a cough and hoarse voice. Sometimes, watery eyes and swollen lymph nodes in the neck also occur.

### Cause

- Colds are caused by many respiratory viruses. Healthy infants get a few colds during their first year.
- Colds rarely occur during the first 6 months. Reason: baby is protected by mother's antibodies.
- Colds are not serious. With a cold, about 10% of infants develop an ear infection.

### Colds: Symptoms of Secondary Bacterial Infections

Using this guide, you can decide if your child develops a complication. Look for these symptoms:

- Earache or ear discharge.
- Sinus pain not relieved by nasal washes.
- Trouble breathing or rapid breathing.
- Fever lasts over 3 days.
- Fever that goes away for 24 hours and then returns.

## Care Advice

### 1. Key Points

- It's normal for healthy infants to get a few colds during the first year. With each new cold, your child's body builds up immunity to that virus.
- Most parents know when their baby has a cold. You or their siblings got it first. Most often, you don't need to call or see your child's doctor.
- There are no medicines to make a cold go away sooner. But, there are good ways to help many of the symptoms.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

### 2. For a Runny Nose With Lots of Discharge: Suction the Nose

- The nasal mucus and discharge is washing germs out of the nose and sinuses.
- Gently suction the nose with a suction bulb or newer device.

3. **For a Blocked Nose, Use Nasal Saline to Open It**
  - Use saline (salt water) nose drops or spray to loosen up the dried mucus. If you don't have saline, you can use a few drops of clean tap water that has been boiled.
  - STEP 1: Do 1 nostril at a time. Put in 1 drop at a time.
  - STEP 2: Suction out each nostril out while closing off the other nostril. Then, do other side.
  - STEP 3: Repeat nose drops and suctioning until the discharge is clear.
  - How often: Do nasal saline when your baby can't breathe through the nose. Before breast or bottle feedings are a good time.
  - Saline nose drops or spray can be bought in any drugstore. No prescription is needed.
  - Reason for nose drops: Suction alone can't remove dried or sticky mucus. Also, babies can't nurse or drink from a bottle unless the nose is open.
4. **Fluids**
  - Offer more formula or breastfeeds than usual.
  - Goal: Keep your child well hydrated.
  - It will thin out the mucus discharge from the nose. Also, it loosens up any phlegm in the lungs.
5. **Humidifier**
  - If the air in your home is dry, use a humidifier. Reason: Dry air makes nasal mucus thicker.
6. **Over The Counter (OTC) Medicines for Colds: Don't Use**
  - Cold Medicines. Don't give any non-prescription cold or cough medicines to young children. They are not approved by the FDA under 6 years. Reasons: They are not safe and can cause
    - serious side effects. Also, they are not helpful. They can't remove dried mucus from the nose. Nasal saline works best.
  - No Antibiotics. Antibiotics are not helpful for viruses or colds. Antibiotics may be used if your child gets an ear infection.
7. **Fever**
  - For fevers above 102° F (39° C), give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. See a Dose Table. Note: Lower fevers are important for fighting infections.
  - Exception: before 3 months, call your child's doctor and don't give any fever meds..
  - For ALL fevers: Keep your child well hydrated. .
  - Give extra breastmilk or formula.
8. **What to Expect**
  - Fever can last 2-3 days.
  - Nasal drainage can last 7-14 days.
  - Cough can last 2-3 weeks.
9. **Return to Child Care**
  - Your child can go back after the fever is gone for 24 hours.

## Call Your Doctor If

- Earache occurs
- Fever lasts more than 3 days
- Nasal discharge lasts more than 14 days
- Cough lasts more than 3 weeks
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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