

UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS



Upper respiratory tract infections, also known as the common cold, are caused by the presence of a virus in a person's respiratory tract (nose, throat and lungs). A person may catch 2-3 colds in a year, depending on their health status, age, stress levels, and intensity/duration of exposure.

ACUTE SINUSITIS

Acute sinusitis, or a sinus infection, is the inflammation of the sinus (nose) caused by a virus.

Symptoms of sinusitis includes:

- ▣ Congestion
- ▣ Headache
- ▣ Nasal Discharge
- ▣ Facial Pain

These symptoms may last 10 -14 days.

ACUTE PHARYNGITIS

Acute pharyngitis, or sore throat, is the inflammation of the pharynx (throat) and/or tonsils caused by a virus.

Symptoms of pharyngitis includes:

- ▣ Sore Throat (Painful Swallowing)
- ▣ Headache
- ▣ Sneezing
- ▣ Fatigue

These symptoms may last 5-7 days.

ACUTE BRONCHITIS

Acute bronchitis, or chest cold, is the inflammation of the bronchi (airways in your lungs) caused by a virus.

Symptoms of bronchitis includes:

- ▣ Cough
- ▣ Mild Shortness of Breath
- ▣ Fever
- ▣ Chest Discomfort
- ▣ Mucus

These symptoms may last 2-14 days. Coughing can last as long as 3 weeks.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

ANTIBIOTICS ARE NOT PRESCRIBED FOR UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT TREAT VIRAL INFECTIONS

Inappropriate use of antibiotics may lead to...

- Antibiotic resistance (when antibiotics cannot treat bacterial infections anymore).
- *Clostridium difficile* infections (irritation of large intestine/colon that results in diarrhea and severe abdominal pain).
- Adverse drug reactions such as diarrhea, vomiting, nausea and upset stomach.

Your body is able to eliminate most viral infections on its own. When you have a viral infection, consider following these suggestions to feel better:



- ▣ Rest as much as possible
- ▣ Drink plenty of fluids (at least 2L or 8 cups a day)
- ▣ Take over-the-counter medications after consulting a health care professional:
 - ▣ Acetaminophen (Tylenol ®) for fever and aches
 - ▣ Ibuprofen (Advil ®) for fever and aches
 - ▣ DM cough syrup (Benylin ®) and lozenge (cough candy) for a sore throat
 - ▣ Nasal Spray (Salinex ®) for nasal stuffiness

Return to the doctor in the following scenarios...

Acute Sinusitis

- If temperature over ___°C persists for 2 days or more
- If symptoms last more than 7 days
- If you have severe pain

Acute Pharyngitis

- If you have severe pain that is not relieved by acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen
- If you have difficulty swallowing despite taking acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen
- If you have a muffled voice
- If you have difficulty breathing

Acute Bronchitis

- If you have temperature greater than ___°C
- If you have severe shortness of breath
- If there is blood in the mucous
- If you have heavy chest pain