

HUNTINGTON PLAZA PEDIATRIC GROUP

Cough & Cold

Your child will probably have more colds, or upper respiratory infections, than any other illness. Most children have at least 8-10 colds in the first two years of life. Colds are caused by viruses and can be spread directly by coughing and sneezing or indirectly by touching your nose or coughing into your hand and then touching a healthy person. Viruses and bacteria are two different causes of infection. Antibiotics kill bacteria, NOT viruses. The best treatment is supportive care. Colds and coughs may last up to 3 weeks. Although coughs often sound bad, keep in mind that coughing is a good reflex that clears out the airways and helps to protect your child from getting pneumonia.

Young infants are susceptible to colds as well. They may become fussy during breast or bottle-feeding because they are nasal breathers and it is difficult to breathe and eat with a stuffy nose. In this case, let your child take several breaks during feeding to catch their breath when they are fussy. Furthermore, placing a cool mist vaporizer in the room may help loosen nasal secretions and help improve a restless night's sleep. Mucous can be many different colors and darker/green mucous does not necessarily indicate the need for antibiotics. Antibiotics do not kill viruses.

Symptoms of a cold

- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Fever

Treatment

- Vaporizer or humidifier
- Steam in bathroom
- Good hydration
- Nasal saline drops and bulb suction out the nose
- Milk does not need to be eliminated from the diet. Restricting it improves a cough only if your child is allergic to milk.

Over the counter (OTC) cough and cold medicines do NOT cure colds and have been shown to have increased risk of side effects in children. Do NOT give any cough and cold medicines to children less than 2 years of age.

Call our office if:

- Fever persists greater than 72 hours
- Fever does not respond to the appropriate dose of Tylenol or Ibuprofen
- Labored breathing/breathing that is difficult AND is not getting better after you clear the nose
- The symptoms last greater than 3 weeks
- Your child is becoming dehydrated
- Your child is ill-appearing/acting sick