

# Take Care of Colds

If you catch a cold, you will be sick for **one to two weeks**. Here are remedies to help you feel better.



- **Stay hydrated** with healthy fluids like water, juice, clear broths, or warm lemon water with honey. Avoid alcohol, coffee, and caffeinated sodas which dehydrate you.
- **Rest!**
- **Soothe a sore throat:**
  - Gargle with saline –  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt dissolved in an 8-ounce glass of warm water. Remember that children under 6 years old cannot gargle properly.
  - Ice chips or popsicles
  - A dash of cayenne pepper in herbal tea or lemon water temporarily relieves soreness.
  - Lozenges or hard candies may help but do not give these to children younger than 6 years due to risk of choking.



- **Relieve a stuffy nose:**
  - Saline drops for infants – available over the counter, put 2-3 drops into one nostril and gently suction that nostril with a bulb syringe. Place the bulb *only*  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch into the nostril and release the bulb *slowly*. Suctioning deeper or quickly can hurt the nasal passages and make them swell *more*.
  - Older children and adults can use saline nasal drops too.
  - Run a vaporizer and take steamy showers.



- **Relieve coughs:**
  - Honey works better than any cough syrup you can buy. Use  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon for 2- to 5-year-olds, one teaspoon for 6- to 11-year-olds, and two teaspoons for anyone 12- and older.

What does NOT work for colds:

- Antibiotics have no effect on cold viruses or bronchitis.
- Over-the-counter cold and cough medicines have little or no beneficial effect and may cause serious or even life-threatening side effects in children.

The jury is still out on these – we do not know if they help:



- Vitamin C
- Echinacea
- Zinc

**Protect yourself and others.** Wash your hands often with soap and water. Cough or sneeze into a tissue then throw it away, or cough or sneeze into your upper shirt sleeve. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Stay away from others when you are sick.