

Staying away from colds and the flu!

Many people get colds and the flu in the fall and winter. These tips can help.

Avoid catching a cold or the flu

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Clean your telephone and other items that have been used by someone with a cold.
- For the flu, you should also get a flu shot every year. It may not be too late to get your flu shot.

Treating colds

Colds are common. You may have to just wait until you feel better. Taking these steps will help you feel better while you wait for your cold to go away:

- Some adults can take aspirin, acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin) to relieve aches and pains.
- Never give aspirin to children younger than age 19. There are special doses of acetaminophen or ibuprofen for kids.
- Drink lots of liquids.

- Get bed rest only if you feel tired.

The flu

In many ways, you will feel the same with colds and the flu. You may also have these symptoms with the flu:

- Fever that may last three or four days
- A headache and other muscle aches and pains
- Fatigue and weakness that may last two or three weeks

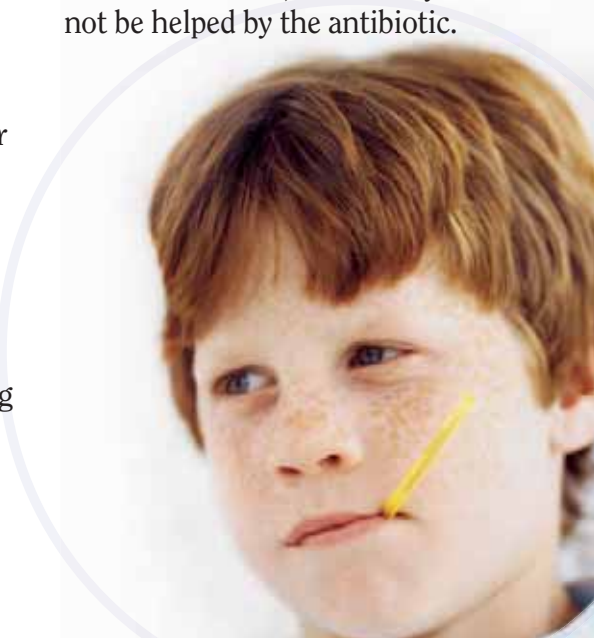
You may not need to go to your health care provider for a cold or the flu, but call him or her if:

- Ear pain becomes severe
- A sore throat becomes severe, and you have a fever
- You cough up thick green mucus
- A child has difficulty breathing and starts to wheeze

Antibiotics

Antibiotics do not help you get over the cold or flu. Antibiotics

work against bacteria. Viruses, not bacteria, cause colds and the flu. However, you may get a bacterial infection on top of the cold or flu. In these cases, your health care provider may prescribe an antibiotic. If you get pills, always make sure you take the pills until they are all gone, not just until you feel better. If you stop the antibiotic before you have taken all the pills, you can develop another infection, which may not be helped by the antibiotic.



Take a stand against falls

Falls are not a normal part of aging. They do not result from sheer clumsiness. Falls occur for many different reasons — often ones you can control.

Hazards around the home are a common cause of falls. Play it safe with these steps:

- Keep floors and stairs free of clutter.
- Put things you use often on shelves that are easy to reach.
- Make sure you have adequate lighting throughout your home.

Healthy habits can lessen your risk for falls, too. For example:

- Stay active. Weight-bearing exercises, such as walking and climbing stairs, can help make you stronger — and less likely to fall. And other exercises, such as tai chi, have been shown to improve balance.
- Get your eyesight checked yearly.
- Talk to your health care provider about the side effects of all medicines you are taking. Some can affect your balance.
- Stand up slowly after sitting or lying down.