

Viral Illness Advice

This leaflet is intended for the carers of children to help with your child's recovery and explain how to manage a child with viral illness.

What are the symptoms of viral illness?

- Blocked or runny nose
- Sore throat
- Headaches
- Muscle aches
- Coughs
- Sneezing
- Raised temperature
- Pressure in ears and face
- Loss of taste and smell
- It is common for children to lose their appetite when they have a cold for a few days.

How can you treat it yourself?

- Rest and sleep
- Keep warm
- Drink plenty of water (fruit juice or squash mixed with water is OK) to avoid dehydration

A pharmacist can provide advice about how to:

Ease aches or lower a temperature with painkillers like paracetamol or ibuprofen
Speak to your pharmacist with regards to other additional treatments / remedies

Are Antibiotics needed?

Doctors don't recommend antibiotics for colds because they won't relieve your child's symptoms or speed their recovery. Antibiotics are only effective against bacterial infections but do not help viruses.

What about the Flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine helps prevent flu but not colds

See your doctor or attend Emergency Department if your child's:

- Symptoms do not improve within 5 days
- Symptoms get suddenly worse
- Temperature is very high, or your child feels hot and shivery
- You are concerned about your child's symptoms
- Finding it hard to breathe or develop chest pain
- There is a decrease in number of wet nappies

How to avoid spreading the cold:

Colds are caused by viruses and easily spread to other people. Your child is infectious until all their symptoms have gone. This usually takes a week or two

Cold is spread by germs from coughs and sneezes which can live on hands and surfaces for 24 hours. To reduce the risk of spreading a cold:

- Wash your hands/child's hand often with warm water and soap
- Use tissues to trap germs when your child coughs or sneezes
- Bin used tissues as quickly as possible
- Avoid sharing of towels
- Avoid sharing of toys with a child who has a cold

If you are concerned about your child's progress, or if they have not improved within 5 days, we advise you to contact your GP or attend the Emergency Department at the Grange University hospital (not a Minor injury unit)

Reference: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/>
Common cold | Health topics A to Z | CKS | NICE

**"This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg".**