

Colds

Colds are caused by viruses. In fact, there are over 200 different cold viruses, which is why they bother us so often. Most children will get about **six to eight colds per year**, with a two year old in daycare averaging on a month. Usually, the fever of a cold lasts only two or three days, but the cough and runny nose may go on for two to three weeks. Often these symptoms seem worse in the morning and after naps, because of the buildup of mucus while the child is lying down. Congestion often sounds terrible while the child is actually breathing well. We have no medicines to make a cold go away, but the following can often help with symptoms:



1. A cold mist humidifier or vaporizer helps keep breathing passages moist. Place one in the bedroom to counteract the dry Wyoming air which is especially bad in the winter when we dry it out more with furnaces
2. Nasal saline can be used to loosen up dry mucous in the nose. Place a couple drops in each nostril then suction gently. Nasal saline can be purchased over the counter or you can make your own solution with $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ a teaspoon salt per 1 cup of water.
3. Suctioning the nose can help clear runny mucous. You can use the bulb suction provided by the nursery or if this is not working well there are other suction devices available over the counter including a Nose Frida. Use nasal saline drops right before suctioning and only suction as needed as frequent suctioning can damage the nasal lining. The best time to suction is right before eating and sleep.
4. An upright position can help with mucous drainage. A baby will likely be most comfortable in an infant seat and a toddler will likely do best propped up.
5. Fluids are important in helping relieve cold discomfort. If your infant under 6 months does not want to drink formula, you can try using Pedialyte. In an infant over 6 months or toddler, if they do not want to drink try clear liquids such as Pedialyte or juice. If your child is not interested in eating, don't worry! Your child's appetite will come back when he or she feels better.
6. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen (in children over 6 months) can be helpful for fever and fussiness. See our dosage chart to find the correct dose. Please call the office before giving acetaminophen to a child under 3 months.
7. Cough medicines are not effective in children younger than 6 years of age and can cause serious side effects such as difficulty breathing, irritability and hallucinations. For children over the age of one, you can give honey to help with their cough. Use half a teaspoon for children aged 2 to 5 years, a teaspoon for children aged 6 to 11 years, and 2 teaspoons for children 12 years and older. For children 4 years and older you can also use lozenges or cough drops as directed by the package. Do not give them to children under 4 years of age as they may choke.

We hope these suggestions will help. If a cold extends beyond 10-14 days or if your child has a fever after 3-4 days, an office visit may be needed. If your child has an ear infection or other **bacterial** complication, antibiotics may be needed.