



# Cold and Flu Season

Issue #9

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## Antibiotics are not always the treatment of choice.

Nobody likes to feel sick, but yet we all have times when we do feel sick. It is during these times that we must decide if the sickness and symptoms that we have are due to a bacterial infection or a viral infection.

Distinguishing between the two types of infection is key to knowing when to let the body fight off the virus or when to seek out a medical doctor for a prescription for an antibiotic. Antibiotics only work to kill bacteria, they are not an effective treatment for viral infections.

Our society's overuse of antibiotics has caused many forms of bacteria to mutate and become resistant to antibiotics. According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association* Streptococcus pneumoniae (Strep) infections were sensitive to Penicillin until the 1960s. At that time, resistance to the antibiotic began. By 1987, 2 of every 10,000 (0.02%)

Strep strains were resistant to Penicillin. By 1995, about 3,000 of every 10,000 (30%) strains are resistant to Penicillin.

The main reason that we see antibiotic resistance of bacteria is the overuse of antibiotics. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that among children receiving Penicillin for preventative treatment of recurrent ear infections increased the Strep resistance to 25%.

A dangerous outcome of this overuse of antibiotics and the resultant resistance is that these resistant bacteria are much harder to kill. They stay in the body for longer periods of time and can cause severe illness and even death. The cure for these resistant bacteria can often be stronger antibiotics and even hospital stays for the needed treatment.

The easiest way to slow the process of bacteria becoming resistant to antibiotics is to only use antibiotics when they are necessary. Many medical doctors are now looking at the benefits of the "wait

and see" treatment for many of the common illness that make people go to their offices. The "wait and see" approach is simple: if you have a viral infection, you will usually get better in 7-10 days. If you are not getting better, you might have a bacterial infection and require antibiotics.

Additionally, medical doctors are being urged by the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) to adopt the "wait and see" approach. The CDC is also suggesting that the medical doctors do more specific testing so that the correct antibiotic can be used for the correct disease process. Giving someone a general antibiotic is not an acceptable treatment anymore with the rising problems of resistance. Symptoms need to be evaluated thoroughly, tests need to be ran, and the correct treatment determined.

The CDC is also urging the general public to be more aware of the growing problems of antibiotic overuse. Antibiotics do not help treat viral infections (such as colds, the flu, many ear

infections, etc.) Middle ear infections (Otitis Media) and upper respiratory infections (colds) are the most common conditions that receive antibiotic prescriptions. However, using antibiotics for these conditions is frequently an inappropriate treatment as these conditions are usually caused by a virus.

Strep throat, sinus infections, and pneumonia are bacterial infections. In these instances, specific testing should allow for specific diagnosis and treatment—of which antibiotics might be useful.

The CDC is also urging the public to ask for specific tests to be ran prior to receiving a prescription for a minor illness. These tests can determine which antibiotic, if any, is the appropriate treatment.

Frequent use of antibiotics, especially in children, can cause problems with the body's natural ability to fight off infections and to stay healthy. Often, the best treatment is rest, increased fluids (water is best), and nutritious food to promote healing.

### On the other side:

Why the runny nose?

Is it a cold or the flu?

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### Office Hours:

**Monday:**  
7:30-4:00

**Tuesday:**  
8:00-6:00

**Wednesday:**  
9:00-3:00

**Thursday:**  
8:00-6:00

**Friday:**  
9:00-5:00

**Closed from**  
**11:00-12:00 for**  
**lunch**

## Why the runny nose?

In the fall and early winter, some children (and even adults) seem to constantly have a runny nose. Most often, these symptoms will go away over time as they are a natural part of what happens to the body when it has a cold or is fighting off a cold.

People get runny noses because germs from cold virus first get into the nose and sinuses. During the first couple of days, the nose makes clear mucus to help wash the germs out. After a few days, the body begins to fight back to get rid of the germs. The mucus then becomes yellow or white. This is also a normal response. As the bacteria that

normally live in the body begin to grow back, the mucus can become greenish in color as the some of the bacteria gets washed out of the nose and sinuses. This is also normal and does not necessarily mean that there is an overwhelming infection occurring.

The best treatment for the runny nose is to wait and let the body fight. Usually this is from a virus, so antibiotics will not help with the symptoms. Some people like using cool mist vaporizers or saltwater nose drops to help with the symptoms and to make them feel better.



## Is it a cold or the flu?

It is that time of year when many of us are dealing with stuffy heads, runny noses, watery eyes, and increased tiredness.

It is also that time of year when we hear a lot of information about flu shots and the hazards of the big, bad flu bug.

Most often, when people get sick at this time of year, they have cold. They have a virus that is making them feel miserable for a time, but it will go away and they will get better. It may seem like the sick feelings will last forever, but in reality, the main viral infection causing a cold only last 7-14 days. Some of the symptoms may last longer than that depending on your body's ability to recover from the illness.

Both colds and the flu are caused by viral infections, therefore, prescriptions for antibiotics are not going to help rid your body of those viruses.

Some natural remedies that can help you feel better while you are getting over your cold or flu include:

1. Increased rest and sleep
2. Increased fluids—especially water
3. Vitamin C
4. Eating a healthy diet and avoiding "junk food"
5. Receiving chiropractic care

Giving your body help to prevent the illness is much easier than trying to treat the illness once it sets in. Natural therapies to help prevent colds and flus include chiropractic care acupuncture therapy. Both treatments can improve the body's ability to fight the illness off before you even get sick!

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rarely	Common – usually lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rarely	Common
General aches & pains	Slight	Usual – often severe
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Usual – can last 2-3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Usually at the beginning
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate	Common – can be severe