Symptoms of Viral Upper Respiratory Infections (Colds and Influenza)

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En Español (Spanish Version)

The Common Cold

The symptoms of a common cold usually resolve on their own within 1-2 weeks.

Symptoms include:

- Nasal congestion
- A runny nose
- Sneezing
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Malaise (not feeling well)
- No or minimal fever

Sore Throat due to Inflammation

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Influenza

The symptoms of influenza are similar to those of a cold, except you will have a fever as well.

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Malaise (usually severe fatigue)
- Decreased appetite
- Dry cough
- A runny nose or nasal congestion
- Headache
- Muscle aches (usually severe)
• Sore throat
• Watery eyes
• Nausea and/or vomiting

Most people are familiar with these symptoms, however there are a few specific things to look out for:

Runny Nose

The discharge from your nose is usually clear and watery to begin with, later becoming thicker and perhaps yellow or green. Yellow or green combined with a fever, sore face or teeth, and persistent symptoms may signal the onset of a sinus infection. Blood in the mucus or phlegm along with a headache is even more likely to be due to a sinus infection.

Dry Cough

A dry cough is much less problematic than a wet cough. If you start producing colored sputum, be it yellow, green, or bloody, it could be a sign of bronchitis or pneumonia; contact your doctor. This is even more important if you are a smoker.

Sore Throat

If your (or your child's) throat hurts, take a look with a flashlight. Also feel the upper neck below the angle of the jaw and below the ears. If the glands are swollen or the throat is bright red or covered with yellow or white goo (discharge or exudates), it may be strep throat that should be treated with penicillin (to prevent rheumatic fever). Contact your doctor.

REFERENCES:


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