



COLDS AND FLU

BY GUS HOFFMAN, MD MBA

Here we are again, entering cold and flu season. In our climate we see it every year during the November to March season. Doors are shut against the cold. The kids are in school trading viruses on a daily basis. Influenza virus is migrating around the globe. Holidays means that we mix with our cousins, aunts and uncles. Lots of sharing - viruses that is.

Most of us experience a cold or infection during this time of year. If you have little ones under 3 years at home, they are catching every virus that passes the door. More importantly these cute little ones have proved to be the vector for passing the influenza virus. Which brings us to the question of what can we do to prevent some of these infections?

First remember that most viruses are transported from one individual to another through mucus. It is the contact with that mucus which exposes us to the viruses. Also be aware that a good sneeze or cough can carry the virus as far as four to six feet. Door knobs, food and drink can be exposed to the viruses just by being in the way. Kleenex not thrown away can transfer the virus from one hand to another. Shaking hands after blowing the nose can transfer the same. Eating or drinking after another person is a great way to transfer just about anything. (Kissing we will leave out of the discussion because of the benefits.) Thus generally we can say, it is mostly in the mucus.

However as much as we may want we can't stay away from all exposures. For these we have developed medications, vaccines, and sick leave. Vaccines are particularly of value when it comes to influenza. Although the influenza virus mutates from year to year, thus requiring the usage of a different vaccine, influenza vaccine can be beneficial. If there is the correct combination of antigens in the vaccine, it can give you 85% to 90% protection. There are studies that suggest there is some protection given even though the vaccine is not consistent with the virus going around. It would be particularly important for your children to have the vaccine as they have been found to be the carriers.

For protection against other viral infections use the old standby of hand washing, not eating or drinking after another and, as your mother told you, cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing. Hand washing has been shown to be effective in preventing the spread of germs. The alcohol hand wipes are also effective. When you do get ill, rest and fluids really do help. Tylenol and ibuprofen can lower fever and relieve the aching. And remember! Antibiotics do not kill a virus. It is true that a cold lasts one week with antibiotics and seven days without an antibiotic. Unfortunately a recent study showed that 60% of adults receive an antibiotic from the doctor for a cold.

We always think we need something extra because of a complication from the cold. Most of the time we just have a routine cold. Sinus infection has been defined by the government as congestion over twelve days and/or with pain over the sinuses. Certainly sometimes we get pneumonia or bronchitis but compared to the total number of colds such complications are unusual. For such complications you do need to see your physician. And relax - Avian flu (H5N1) has not arrived in this hemisphere yet, and so far has not been transmitted from one person to another.

Lastly the general guidelines for those who should receive the flu vaccine include children over 6 months of age; elderly over 55 years; those with chronic heart or pulmonary disease; those having had a splenectomy; health care workers; those caring for ill family members at home; and then the general public.

WAYS TO TREAT YOUR COLD AND FLU SYMPTOMS

Stay home and rest, especially while you have a fever.

Drink plenty of fluids like water, fruit juices and clear soups. Fluids help loosen mucus. Fluids are also important if you have a fever because a fever can dry up your body's fluids which can lead to dehydration. Gargle with warm salt water a few times a day to relieve a sore throat. Throat sprays or lozenges may also help relieve the pain.

Use saline (salt water) nose drops to help loosen mucus and moisten the tender skin in your nose.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TO REGISTER, OR FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
www.byu.edu/wellness OR CALL 2-5884

ALL EVENTS ARE  **FREE** UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



HOLIDAY NUTRITION CHALLENGE

NOVEMBER 21 - JANUARY 6

DON'T LET THE BANQUETS, PARTIES, AND FEASTS GET THE BEST OF YOU THIS HOLIDAY SEASON. KEEP A GOOD NUTRITIONAL BALANCE BY EATING HEALTHIER HOLIDAY FOODS AND NOT OVERINDULGING. PRIZES WILL BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THIS CHALLENGE. REGISTER ON LINE.

“FINDING PEACE” WELL & WISE

DECEMBER 8, 12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M. ROOM B094 JFSB

WE ARE EXCITED TO PRESENT A WELL & WISE THIS DECEMBER ON FINDING PEACE WITHIN. BRO. RANDY BOTT, FROM THE RELIGION DEPARTMENT, WILL BE DISCUSSING WAYS IN WHICH EACH OF US INDIVIDUALLY CAN FIND PEACE IN OUR LIVES. REGISTER ON LINE.

FINDING PEACE - A GUIDE TO A STRESS FREE HOLIDAY

COMING TO A MAILBOX NEAR YOU THIS DECEMBER!!

HAVE YOU EVER FOUND THE HOLIDAY SEASON TO BE MORE STRESSFUL THAN FUN? THIS YEAR CAN BE DIFFERENT. MAKE YOUR HOLIDAYS MORE PEACEFUL AND LESS STRESSFUL. WATCH FOR A CALENDAR ON WAYS TO “FIND PEACE AND DE-STRESS” YOUR HOLIDAY, COURTESY OF THE BYU WELLNESS PROGRAM.

FLU VS. COLDS A GUIDE TO SYMPTOMS FOR CHILDREN

QUESTIONS TO ASK...	FLU	COLD
WAS YOUR CHILD'S ONSET OF ILLNESS...	SUDDEN	SLOW
DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE A...	HIGH FEVER	NO (OR MILD) FEVER
IS YOUR CHILD'S EXHAUSTION LEVEL...	SEVERE	MILD
IS YOUR CHILD'S COUGH...	DRY	SEVERE OR HACKING
IS YOUR CHILD'S THROAT...	SORE	FINE
IS YOUR CHILD'S HEAD...	ACHY	HEADACHE-FREE
IS YOUR CHILD'S APPETITE...	DECREASED	NORMAL
ARE YOUR CHILD'S MUSCLES...	ACHY	FINE
DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE...	CHILLS	NO CHILLS

IF MOST OF YOUR ANSWERS FELL INTO THE FIRST CATEGORY, CHANCES ARE THAT YOUR CHILD HAS THE FLU. IF YOUR ANSWERS USUALLY BELONGED IN THE SECOND CATEGORY, IT'S MOST LIKELY A COLD. BUT DON'T BE TOO QUICK TO BRUSH OFF YOUR CHILD'S ILLNESS AS JUST ANOTHER COLD. THE IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IS THAT FLU SYMPTOMS CAN VARY FROM CHILD TO CHILD (AND THEY CAN CHANGE AS THE ILLNESS PROGRESSES), SO IF YOU SUSPECT THE FLU, CALL YOUR DOCTOR.

BY DR. STEVEN DOWSHEN, M.D. WWW.KIDSHEALTH.ORG



MEDICINE FOR A COLD OR THE FLU

No medicine can cure the cold or the flu. It can help relieve some of the symptoms of your cold or flu. Many cold/flu products are available without a prescription. The following is a list of common ingredients in these products that relieve cold/flu symptoms. Read labels carefully and if you have questions, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Analgesics relieve aches and pains and reduce fever. Examples: acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen, ketoprofen, naproxen. Warning: Children and teenagers should not be given aspirin.

Antitussives tell your brain to stop coughing. Don't take an antitussive if you're coughing up mucus. Example: dextromethorphan.

Expectorants help thin mucus so it can be coughed up more easily. Example: guaifenesin.

Oral decongestant shrinks the nasal passages and reduce congestion. Examples: ephedrine, psuedoephedrine.