

## Education

### UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

A Cold or an Upper Respiratory Infection is a VIRAL infection of the nose and throat. The cold viruses are spread from one person to another by hand contact, coughing and/or sneezing. The fever part of a cold usually lasts 3 days and all nose and throat symptoms including cough should be gone by 10-14 days.  
(Barton D. Schmitt, MD, 1999)

#### HELPFUL HINTS:

- \* Over-the-counter cold medications might relieve some symptoms, but they DO NOT shorten the length of the cold or fight the infection. Using these products in children under 6 years old is not routinely recommended, therefore should be directed by provider.
- \* Cool moist air (humidifier or fresh air), head elevation and frequent fluids to drink are very helpful.
- \* Yellow to green nasal drainage CAN BE COMMON during the second half of a cold, usually improving between 5 and 10 days after illness begins.
- \* A bacterial SINUS INFECTION might be considered if symptoms worsen on or after the 5th day or if the child is not improving by the 10th day.
- \* For sore throats: cold drinks, popsicles, ice chips, and pain medications (Acetaminophen & Ibuprofen) can be helpful
- \* For babies and toddlers: nasal saline drops/ gel, followed by a nasal aspirator or a drink, may help relieve congestion /discomfort.

*Antibiotics* do NOT treat the common cold. Some health care providers, in an effort to please patients, use antibiotics prematurely. This is often unnecessary and contributes to the overuse of antibiotics and can cause antibiotic resistance in future illnesses.

#### CALL BACK ANYTIME IF...

- \* The child complains of ear pain, shortness of breath or frequent repetitive cough.
- \* For babies and toddlers: waking up at night, with crying, difficulty returning to sleep and/or not feeding well
- \* The child has had a fever into the 4th day
- \* Symptoms are not improving by the 10th day or are worsening on or after the 5th day