

The Cold Hard Facts

Sneezing, coughing, runny nose...we all recognize the classic symptoms of the common cold.

A cold is a viral infection of the nose and throat. Although generally harmless, it is estimated that it is responsible for 40% of time lost from work and 30% of school absences.

People are more likely to develop a cold in the fall and winter months when the humidity in the air is low, as this is when viruses responsible for the common cold survive best. The cold weather also makes the inside lining of your nose drier and more at risk to viral infection. The chilly temperatures encourage people to stay indoors, making it easy for the virus to spread.

Catching a Cold

Cold viruses are very contagious from one person to the next. It is possible to “catch” a cold from airborne droplets of another person’s sneeze or from skin-to-skin contact. Cold viruses can live on objects like door handles, telephones, pens, etc. for up to 3 hours. If a healthy person touches an object covered with cold germs and then touches their eyes, mouth or nose, they too can catch the virus.



Prevention is Key

The best advice to prevent a cold is to keep your immune system strong. Your immune system is your body’s defense against bacteria, viruses, toxins and parasites that would love to invade your body. Keep it in tip top form by staying in shape, eating well and getting plenty of sleep. Fight germs by washing your hands properly and often and covering your coughs and sneezes.

Is there a cure for the cold?

The answer is no. Experts claim there may be over 200 viruses responsible for causing the common cold. Rhinoviruses (from the Greek rhin, meaning “nose”) are the most common cause, responsible for an estimated 30-50% of all colds. Rhinoviruses grow best at temperatures of about 91 degrees F, the temperature inside the human nose.

Soothe Your Symptoms

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of water
- Drink hot tea with lemon and honey to soothe a sore throat and loosen the mucous in your nose
- Gargle with salt water a few times a day to relieve a sore throat (1 tsp. of salt in 1 cup of water)

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A Word of Caution

High fever, significantly swollen glands, severe sinus pain and a cough that produces mucous may be signs that you have a complication or more serious illness. If you experience any of these symptoms, see your healthcare provider.

Sources: www.medicinenet.com

www.commoncold.org