Common Conditions

- Conquering Colds & Flu
- Soothing Sore Throat
- Suppressing Coughs
- Fighting Fever
- Relieving Nausea & Vomiting

BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska

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About Colds & Flu
With all the medical advances we witness every day, it’s disappointing that we still haven’t figured out how to defeat the common cold and flu. These maladies have been with humanity at least since written history began. The average American will suffer through two to four colds each year, and millions will also endure at least one bout of the flu. Each episode can represent a week or two of lost productivity and enjoyment.

Even though there is no cure, there are things you can do to reduce your chances of catching one of these nasty conditions. And if you do catch a cold or flu, there are self-care techniques you can employ to ease your misery and feel better fast.

Signs & Symptoms
One of the first things you’ll need to determine to get on the road to recovery is whether you have a cold or the flu. Although they can feel similar, cold and flu are very different illnesses.

Is it a Cold or the Flu?
Both colds and flu are caused by viruses, and both share the symptoms of fatigue, cough, and nasal congestion. Colds, however, are restricted to the nose, throat, and surrounding air passages. Most colds are not accompanied by fever, chills, or the more severe symptoms identified with flu, and recovery is faster. Flu is almost always more severe than a cold. It hits suddenly with aches, a high fever, and chills. The flu typically runs its course in about a week, although you may feel uncomfortable for several weeks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Flu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Fever</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>102-104°+, 3-4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Headache</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>prominent, sudden onset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ General aches and pains</td>
<td>slight</td>
<td>usual, often severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Fatigue or weakness</td>
<td>mild</td>
<td>can last 2-3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Extreme exhaustion</td>
<td>never</td>
<td>early and prominent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Stuffy nose</td>
<td>common</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Sneezing</td>
<td>usual</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Sore throat</td>
<td>common</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Chest discomfort, cough</td>
<td>mild to moderate</td>
<td>common, can become severe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Approximately four million severe cases of the flu are reported each year worldwide.”
When to Seek Care

The symptoms described here can be signs of a condition much more serious than an average cold or flu. See your healthcare professional if you’re experiencing any of the following.

- If your symptoms last for more than 10 days.
- See a healthcare provider if the pain or swelling over your sinuses gets worse when you bend over or move your head, especially with a fever of 101°F or higher.
- If your cold is accompanied by trouble breathing or wheezing.
- If you experience swollen, painful neck glands or pain in the ears.
- A headache that persists during a cold or flu is a sign that you should see a healthcare provider.
- If you have a sore throat that is very red or has white spots.
- A cough with phlegm that is green, gray, or yellow means you may need to see a healthcare provider.
- Seek medical care if a temperature is higher than 102°F in a 3-month to 3-year-old child; over 104°F in a 3 to 64-year-old; or 102°F or higher in someone age 65 or older.
- If a foul smell comes from the throat, nose, or ears.

Home Treatment

Check out the following tips to feel better fast when you are battling a cold or flu.

- **Drink Fluids**—drinking at least eight, 8 oz. glasses of fluid daily thins your mucus, helping it to flow. Hot drinks and soups are especially effective.
- **Humidify Your Environment**—moisture helps. Use the shower, a humidifier, or breathe over a bowl of hot water.
- **Get Rest**—going to work with a cold isn’t necessarily going to make it worse, but keep in mind you are most contagious in the first 48 hours.
- **Cough and Blow**—blow your nose gently and often, and cough as needed. You want to keep the phlegm moving, not suppress it.
- **Gargle**—gargle three times daily with salt water to soothe your sore throat. Salt helps sterilize the bacteria in the back of your throat and promotes the healing of inflamed tissues. To make a salt solution, stir 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water and gargle for 30-60 seconds.
- **Don’t Take Antibiotics**—unless there’s solid medical evidence that you have a secondary bacterial infection. If you are unsure, see your healthcare provider.
- **Take an Over-The-Counter (OTC) Remedy**—Take single-ingredient products like Sudafed or Robitussin only as needed and as directed. Make sure you read the label warnings and only take something if you really need it. Be careful about interactions between over-the-counter and prescribed medications.

continued on the following page...
Colds & Flu

Meningitis

Meningitis is an infection of the tissues and fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Because meningitis can range from mild to life threatening—and because it can mimic the symptoms of the common cold and flu, especially in children—it’s important to be aware of the specific symptoms of meningitis.

Symptoms of Meningitis

✓ Confusion and decreased level of consciousness
✓ Seizures ✓ Vomiting
✓ Sensitivity to light ✓ Skin rash
✓ Fatigue ✓ Dizziness
✓ Muscle aches and weakness
✓ In babies, symptoms may also include fever, irritability, decreased appetite, rash, and a shrill cry.
✓ Young children with meningitis may act like they have the flu, cough, or have trouble breathing.
✓ Older adults and those with depressed immune systems may have only a mild headache and fever.

If these symptoms are present—especially in children—see your healthcare provider right away. Often, meningitis caused by a virus can be treated simply at home because symptoms typically disappear within two weeks. Meningitis caused by bacteria, on the other hand, needs to be treated with antibiotics, and can be deadly if not properly cared for.

Frequently Asked Questions

With all the myths floating around about colds and flu, it helps to be able to separate fact from fiction. Take a look at the following frequently asked questions (FAQs)—they’ll help you put ineffective remedies to rest and speed recovery.

Q Will antibiotics help me recover faster?
A No. Antibiotics work only against bacterial infections. They’re useless for colds and flu, which are viral infections. But they may be needed for any secondary bacterial infections that may develop as complications of your cold or flu, like an ear or sinus infection.

Q Is it good to take a cough suppressant whenever you have a cough?
A Not necessarily. If your cough is productive (meaning phlegm is coming up from your lungs), coughing can help you get better faster. Remember, if you are coughing up phlegm that is green, gray, or yellow, contact your healthcare provider. A dry, nonproductive cough that keeps you from sleeping has no benefit. Try a single-ingredient cough suppressant containing dextromethorphan at night.

Q Does taking Vitamin C help a cold?
A Some researchers believe so. Vitamin C intake can possibly shorten the length of a cold and even make it less severe. However, it’s most effective when taken in the early stages of the virus. Try oranges or orange juice, strawberries, and/or supplements. (Always follow the recommended dosage).

Q Is it true that if you catch a cold early in the season, you won’t get another?
A Sorry, but the answer is no. There are hundreds of different cold viruses. You won’t catch the same one again, but you may catch another.
Prevention

There’s no question about it—the best way to deal with a cold or flu is to avoid it in the first place. By taking a few precautions, you can dramatically cut your chances of picking up one of these viruses, and be well on your way to staying healthy and productive this cold and flu season. Here are some tips to consider.

- **Wash your hands before you touch your face or eat**, after using the bathroom, and after touching shared items like telephones or computers. Use antibacterial soap, lather well, and use warm water. Washing your hands often may be the single most important thing you can do to avoid a cold or flu.

- **Get at least eight hours of sleep each night** so your body isn’t run down.

- **Avoid physical contact with sick people if possible.**

- **Consider staying home during the first few days of a cold**, when you’re most contagious. Wash your hands after contact with sick people.

- **Eat a healthy, vitamin-rich diet**, including five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

- **Use a humidifier during cold and flu season**—dry nasal passages are less resistant to viruses.

- **Use disposable tissues instead of cloth handkerchiefs to reduce germs.**

- **Nurture your relationships with friends, family, and your community.** A large circle of friends is associated with better resistance to illness.

- **Don’t share towels, eating utensils, or toothbrushes.**

- **Consider getting a flu shot.**

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**A Shot of Prevention**

An annual flu shot is a way to reduce your chances of getting the flu. Influenza is a serious condition, and no matter what your age, you can still get it. The flu causes 50,000 deaths each year (mostly among those aged 65 years or older) and 114,000 hospitalizations in the US alone.

Much of the illness and death caused by the flu can be prevented by yearly flu shots. People in certain “high-risk” groups (those who may develop serious complications from the flu), and people who are in close contact with those at high-risk, should get a flu shot every year.

**Who Should Get a Flu Shot?**

- Persons over the age of 50.
- Those living in long-term care facilities.
- People with chronic conditions whose immune system is weakened.
- Anybody in close contact with people at high risk for getting a serious case of the flu.

**Is a Flu Shot Right For You?**

Some people should talk with a healthcare provider before getting a flu shot. These people include:

- Those who have had a severe allergic reaction to hen eggs or to a previous flu shot.
- Individuals who have a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS).

Get a flu shot six to eight weeks before flu season begins (sometime in October or November). According to the NIH, getting a shot at this time will give your body time to produce enough antibodies to mount a strong defense during flu season, which hits its stride between late December and early March. Remember to get a new vaccine every year. Vaccines are designed for specific strains of the flu, which can be different every year.

“Vitamin C is most effective when taken before illness strikes or immediately after you’ve been exposed to a cold or the flu.”
Sore Throat

About Sore Throats
Sore throats can be one of the most annoying and uncomfortable ailments you can have. It’s difficult to speak, swallow, or get a good night’s sleep. The good news is, sore throats are usually the result of a minor illness, and with proper care and attention, can often be treated quickly and effectively at home.

Types of Sore Throat
In this section we’ll discuss two of the most typical kinds of sore throat—the common, mild sore throat often associated with other illnesses or environmental factors, and strep throat, which is caused by a more serious bacterial infection.

Common Sore Throat. Most often you’ll find that the common sore throat accompanies the cold or flu. Postnasal drip (nasal drainage down the back of the throat) is usually the culprit. The common sore throat can also be caused by smoking, air pollution, low humidity, yelling, or breathing through the mouth for long periods of time.

Strep Throat. Strep throat is caused by a streptococcal (strep) bacterial infection in the back of the throat. Strep throat accounts for about 10 percent of sore throats in adults and between 15 and 30 percent of sore throats in children. Strep throat hits quickly and painfully, causing a sudden and severe sore throat. Strep throat is highly contagious, and is most often passed to others when an infected person expels strep bacteria by coughing or sneezing.

Signs & Symptoms
Common Sore Throat or Strep?
Now that we know more about common sore throats and strep bacterial infections, it’s important to be able to distinguish which type of sore throat you are experiencing. Check out the symptoms for both the common sore throat and strep bacterial infection listed below. In most cases, both conditions, when recognized early, can be treated at home without a trip to your healthcare provider.

Symptoms of a Common Sore Throat
✓ A dry, scratchy throat
✓ Pain or irritation in the throat, especially when swallowing or speaking
✓ Coughing and sneezing
✓ Occasional, mild fever
✓ Runny nose and/or postnasal drip
✓ Inflamed or swollen neck glands
✓ Back of the throat and/or tonsils are red or have white spots

Symptoms of Strep Throat
✓ A sudden, severe sore throat
✓ Difficulty swallowing
✓ Yellow, or white spots in the back of the throat
✓ Swollen lymph nodes and tonsils
✓ A fever of 101°F or higher
✓ A relative absence of coughing, sneezing, and stuffy nose (these symptoms are most commonly associated with a common sore throat or cold, not strep throat)
When to Seek Care

If you are experiencing persistent and severe symptoms, they could be the sign of a much more serious condition. The following symptoms mean you may need to seek professional medical help for your sore throat.

- Seek medical help if you are drooling or having difficulty breathing or swallowing.
- If you have a stiff neck, and severe headache.
- If your voice is muffled or you’re having difficulty speaking.
- See a medical provider if you develop a skin rash.
- If you have a fever of more than 101°F (103°F for children) or a fever that lasts for more than two days.
- If you experience a sore throat (or mouth ulcers) lasting two weeks or more.

If your doctor suspects that you have strep throat, a throat culture or rapid strep test—simple tests to determine the cause of your sore throat—will be ordered. In most cases, you’ll learn the results of the test within an hour or two. If you test positive for strep, your doctor will most likely prescribe an antibiotic to help you feel better.

Key Point: In some cases strep throat can trigger rheumatic fever, a condition that affects the heart and joints. Symptoms include weakness, joint pain, and jerking movements in the arms and legs, among others. See a healthcare professional if you experience these symptoms.

A Self-Care Essential

✔ Soothe Your Sore Throat. Gargling with a salt water solution can ease your sore throat. Here’s how to do it:
  - Stir 1/2 tsp. of salt in an 8 oz. glass of warm water
  - Gargle for 30-60 seconds
  - Repeat as needed

Cold Sores

Cold sores, also known as fever blisters, are small, red blisters, which form on the inside or outside of a person’s mouth, typically on the lip. Caused by a herpes virus, cold sores often appear after a cold, fever, or prolonged sun exposure, and are also associated with stress. A painful proposition, cold sores require patience because they take anywhere from seven to 10 days to fully heal.

- If you’re experiencing a cold sore, the following steps may help you find relief and speed healing.
- Apply ice to the cold sore three times per day to reduce swelling.
- Use petroleum jelly or other products designed to soothe and protect cold sores.
- Use an over-the-counter product containing vitamin E or aloe vera to help reduce pain.

Despite the fact that cold sores are commonplace for the majority of Americans, there are several steps you can take to prevent cold sores. To reduce your chances of experiencing a cold sore, put the following tips into practice.

- Use sunscreen or ChapStick to shield your lips from being exposed to harmful UV light.
- Avoid close contact with someone who has or recently had a cold sore.
- Find ways to reduce stress in your life.

While most cold sores are painful, they’re seldom the sign of a serious problem. If your cold sore lasts longer than 2 weeks, or if you have multiple cold sores in a short amount of time, talk with your healthcare provider. He or she may prescribe a medication to reduce the severity and frequency of your cold sores.

A Word of Caution: If you have a cold sore, avoid touching the sore, and keep your hands away from your eyes. Herpes virus infections may have potentially serious complications, especially if they spread to the eyes. In fact, this is a frequent cause of corneal blindness in the US. If you’re experiencing a burning pain in or a rash near the eye or on the tip of your nose, see your healthcare provider immediately.

“Gargling every hour with a warm salt water solution can help soothe your sore throat.”
Common Conditions

Caring for common conditions...

Sore Throat

Home Treatment

As mentioned before, in the majority of cases, common sore throat and strep throat can be treated at home. Use the tips mentioned here to treat yourself for sore throat or strep throat and feel better fast.

Common Sore Throat

Drink eight, 8 oz. glasses of fluids daily to help soothe your throat.

Gargle every hour with warm salt water to reduce discomfort and swelling. To make a salt solution, stir 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water and gargle for 30-60 seconds.

Try over-the-counter throat lozenges and cough drops to soothe a sore throat.

Use a decongestant to help relieve postnasal drip.

Rest your voice.

Take over-the-counter pain relievers (like ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

Use a humidifier to keep nasal passages moist and more resistant to viruses.

Strep Throat

Treatment for strep throat is very similar to the treatment of a common sore throat. With this in mind, try the following tips.

Eat and drink cold foods and liquids to soothe your throat.

Drink extra fluids in addition to the usual eight, 8 oz. glasses—fluids help flush the system and speed healing.

Get plenty of rest (at least eight to 10 hours nightly).

Note: Even though strep throat can be treated at home, doctor prescribed antibiotics are an option. These antibiotics may relieve discomfort and shorten the time a person is contagious, but only if they are given antibiotics within 48 to 72 hours after symptoms begin.

Frequently Asked Questions

Take a look at the following frequently asked questions—they'll help you further understand this condition, and better care for yourself and your family.

Q I've had a sore throat for a while now, could it be mono?

Infectious mononucleosis (mono), often known as “the kissing disease,” includes sore throat as one of its symptoms. Mono is very common among the US population, but just because you have a sore throat, it doesn’t mean you have mono. If your symptoms last for more than a week or two, it may be a good idea to contact your healthcare professional.

Q What increases the risk for strep throat?

Plain and simple, increased risk for strep throat revolves around your close contact with others who are infected. Coughing, sneezing, and touching others who have the infection can spread strep.

Q Who is affected by strep throat?

Strep throat is responsible for five to 15 percent of sore throats in adults, and up to 30 percent of sore throats in children. Strep throat is most commonly

“Strep throat is responsible for five to 15 percent of sore throats in adults, and up to 30 percent of sore throats in children.”
found in children between the ages of three and 15.

Q I thought sore throats and strep throat were caused by cold weather. Isn’t that true?
No, it’s not true. Common sore throats are often the result of a cold or the flu, and strep throat is a bacterial infection. Sore throat is more common during colder months simply because individuals spend more time indoors around each other, and tend to spread illnesses more easily.

Q I’ve heard that strep throat can lead to other, more complicated infections. Is this true?
Strep throat can lead to other infections—like rheumatic fever—but only in rare cases. If your strep throat is severe and not treated properly, it is also possible for infection to spread into the middle ear or sinuses.

Prevention
Though there is very little we can do to prevent a sore throat or strep throat altogether, there are, however, a number of powerful steps we can take to lessen the chances of developing one of these conditions. Practicing the following steps can help you avoid the pain and discomfort associated with a sore or strep throat.

- Avoid contact with anyone you know who has strep throat.
- Wash your hands and face often (hands should be lathered well with antibacterial soap and warm water).
- Don’t share eating and drinking utensils.
- Humidify your home (humidity keeps mucus membranes more resistant to bacteria).
- Drink at least eight, 8 oz. glasses of fluids daily.
- Identify and avoid irritants such as smoke or yelling that cause sore throats.

About “Mono” (Mononucleosis)

Sore throats are often associated with and confused for a condition known as Mononucleosis, A.K.A “the kissing disease.” Mononucleosis (or mono) is a viral infection common in older teens and adolescents. Its symptoms, in addition to a sore throat, include persistent fatigue, weakness, vertigo, swollen lymph nodes, aches, and an enlarged spleen. It is common for mono to last several weeks, but it is typically not severe. The best treatment for mono is getting plenty of rest, proper hydration, and taking over-the-counter medications to relieve general aches. You’ll want to work with your healthcare provider to identify and treat mono.

Is it Strep or Tonsillitis?
Strep throat and tonsillitis share many of the same symptoms including:

- Red and inflamed throat with spots
- Fever
- Sore throat

The main difference between strep throat and tonsillitis is that strep throat is caused by a bacterial infection and tonsillitis is usually caused by a virus. Tonsillitis is most common in children.

Treatment
If you suspect that you have tonsillitis, you can treat symptoms with saltwater gargles, throat lozenges, and over-the-counter pain relievers. More rare cases of tonsillitis caused by bacteria may be treated like strep throat.

What about a Tonsillectomy?
Tonsillectomy, although still fairly common, isn’t performed as often as it used to be. Surgery is only recommended when a chronic bacterial infection is resistant to treatment with medication, or when the infection results in serious complications.
About Coughs

Coughing is the body’s natural way of protecting the lungs from irritants. A certain amount of coughing is ordinary, and even natural, and can help you breathe better. However, prolonged and violent coughing can indicate that some kind of irritant is present in your breathing passages.

Coughing can also often be a symptom of an upper respiratory viral infection like a cold or the flu. Excess mucus draining down the back of your throat (postnasal drip) is often the cause of a cough. A persistent cough is not only uncomfortable, but can also cause your voice to become raw and horse, making it difficult to speak.

Signs & Symptoms

Coughs come in two varieties: productive and nonproductive.

**Productive coughs** are the types that produce phlegm and mucus. Coughs of this type are healthy because they help to clear phlegm and mucus from the lungs.

**Nonproductive coughs** do not produce phlegm or mucus and are frequently the result of irritants such as smoke or dust. Oftentimes, nonproductive coughs occur near the end of a viral infection such as a cold.

There are many causes for both productive and nonproductive coughs.

When to Seek Care

Sometimes, a persistent, harsh cough may be an important indicator that you’re experiencing a more serious medical condition. If you experience any of the following symptoms, contact your healthcare provider right away.

- If you have a fever of 102°F or higher that persists.
- Contact your healthcare professional if you become short of breath or if breathing is troubled or rapid.
- If bloody, yellow, or green sputum is coughed up from the lungs.
- Coughs that linger longer than a week to 10 days, (especially when other symptoms have passed) should be assessed by a healthcare professional.
- Any cough that persists longer than one month should be evaluated by a healthcare professional.
Home Treatment

Most coughs that people experience—though frequently uncomfortable and certainly annoying—are not the sign of a more serious condition. These coughs are easily treated and soothed by employing self-care techniques. If you’re bothered by a particular cough, employing the strategies listed here may help you find the relief you’re looking for.

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Drinking at least eight, 8 oz. glasses of fluid each day will help to keep your throat clear.

- **Use over-the-counter cough suppressants.** Cough suppressants will help soothe your cough.

- **Use medications (expectorants) to help clear your throat.** Such medications will help to increase the flow of fluids in your throat.

- **Use cough drops or lozenges to help soothe an irritated throat.** These items can help to soothe a dry, scratchy, and sore throat.

- **Humidify your environment.** Using a humidifier is good on your throat, makes it easier to breathe, and keeps mucus membranes more resistant to illness.

A Self-Care Essential

- **Humidify Your Environment.** A good humidifier is worth the investment when you’re sick because it will help moisturize your mucus membranes and keep you more resistant to illness. Make sure to change the filter on your humidifier as recommended—dirty filters can spread bacteria.

An Ounce of Prevention

Most experts agree that frequent hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of disease. Unfortunately, it’s been estimated that one out of three people do not wash their hands after using the restroom. By frequently washing your hands, you wash away germs that you have picked up from other people, contaminated surfaces, or from pets.

In addition to frequently washing your hands, there are several other techniques you should follow to help prevent the spread of disease. These include:

- Using a disposable tissue or handkerchief when coughing or sneezing
- Using a hand disinfectant such as Purell after coughing or sneezing
- Avoiding close contact such as shaking hands with infected persons
- Avoiding public restrooms
- Not sharing food, or eating and drinking utensils

By practicing the above behaviors, you’ll better ensure your health, and the health of those around you.

“Most experts agree that frequent hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of disease.”
Fighting Fever

About Fevers
Simply stated, a fever is a higher than normal body temperature. Normal body temperature is, on average, 98.6°F, although body temperature from person to person can vary by as much as one degree. Additionally, your own body temperature will fluctuate throughout the day—being cooler in the morning, and rising throughout the course of the day.

Fever is not an illness, but rather a sign that your body may be fighting off a virus or bacterial infection such as a cold, urinary tract infection, mumps, measles, or chicken pox. A fever up to 101°F can be helpful in the battle because it helps the body react to an infection.

Signs & Symptoms
There are no real symptoms of fevers other than the abnormally high body temperature that is the fever itself. There are however, several different grades of fevers, some more serious than others.

Fever Grade Temperature Range

- **Normal Range:** 97.5°F to 99.6°F
- **Self-Care Range:** 99.6°F to 102°F
- **Cautionary Range:** 102°F to 104°F
- **Emergency Range:** 104°F or higher

Although there are no real symptoms, an individual with a fever may look pale, shiver, or even have goose bumps. It is not uncommon for children to curl up in a ball to conserve body heat. No matter how cold an individual may appear, it’s not a good idea to bundle them up with extra blankets or extra clothing. Doing so will only cause body temperature to further rise.

When to Seek Care
A fever of 104°F or higher that lasts longer than 2 hours is a sign that you may be experiencing a serious medical condition. You should seek medical attention if this is the case, or if you experience any of the following symptoms.

- If your fever has been more than 101°F for more than three days
- If a baby younger than three months, has a temperature of 100.5°F or higher
- If you have a fever accompanied by a severe, throbbing headache
- If you have a fever accompanied by sensitivity to light or sound
- If stiffness or pain in the neck when bending over accompanies your fever
- If the fever brings about mental confusion
- Swelling in the throat along with a fever should be evaluated by a medical professional
- See a doctor if you have a fever and are vomiting regularly
- If your fever is accompanied by breathing problems
- If your fever is accompanied by severe irritability
Home Treatment
Treating a fever may be one of the most common self-care practices you'll ever undertake, so it's good to know some keys to reducing fever and helping you or your loved one feel better as quickly as possible. Check out some general home-treatment tips for fever. In addition to these general tips, treatment tips for fevers of different grades are also listed here.

General Fever Treatment

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** As your temperature begins to rise, your body uses more water. Try to get at least eight, 8 oz. glasses of water daily.
- **Get plenty of rest.** Rest will help your body heal. When sick, aim for eight to 10 hours of sleep nightly.
- **Eat light foods.** Your body burns more calories during a fever. Easily digested foods (like chicken broth) are best.
- **Dress lightly.** Excessive clothing can further increase body temperature.
- **Try taking a bath or shower with luke-warm water.** Luke warm water can help reduce fever. Avoid cold water.

Self-Care For Specific Fever Ranges

**Self-Care Range: 99.6°F to 102°F**
- In most cases, it is not necessary to use over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen for a fever in this range.
- Monitor the fever every 30 minutes.
- Wear cool, comfortable clothing.

**Caution Range: 102°F to 104°F**
- Use over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen to lower the fever. (Always follow label directions). Adults may use aspirin—do not give aspirin to children!
- You may want to contact a healthcare professional for a fever in this range.
- Monitor the fever every 30 minutes.

**Emergency Range: 104°F or higher**
- Call your healthcare provider to seek advice; it may be time to seek professional medical care at this point.
- Use over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen to lower the fever. (Always follow label directions).
- You may try a sponge bath of luke-warm water to reduce the fever.
- Monitor the fever every 30 minutes. If a fever in this range persists longer than 2 hours, you should seek medical attention immediately.

“A fever of 104°F or higher for longer than two hours, should be considered an emergency. Call your healthcare provider to seek advice.”
About Nausea & Vomiting

Two uncomfortable feelings in life are nausea and vomiting. Nausea is an unpleasant, churning sensation felt down inside the stomach, whereas vomiting is the expulsion of stomach contents through the esophagus and out of the mouth. Oftentimes, vomiting is preceded and even caused by an intense feeling of nausea.

Vomiting and nausea, though not diseases in and of themselves, often indicate the presence of a common viral infection—known as gastroenteritis—in the intestines. Other causes of nausea and vomiting may include adverse reactions to certain medications, food poisoning, pregnancy, and motion sickness.

If not cared for properly, nausea and vomiting can lead to other complications that include dehydration (lack of water in the body), aspiration (food lodged in the windpipe), or even serious damage to your body including tearing the food pipe. The rest of this section is dedicated to helping you treat and manage bouts of nausea and vomiting.

Signs & Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of nausea and vomiting are easy to identify. Often a nauseated person will feel the following symptoms.

✓ Fatigue
✓ A warm or sweaty feeling
✓ Excessive saliva in the mouth

While nausea and vomiting are usually symptoms of other medical conditions, there are a number of triggers that can make a person feel nauseous or vomit.

**Common causes of nausea and vomiting**

✓ Gastroenteritis (a common viral condition passed easily from person to person)
✓ Adverse reactions to medications
✓ Excessive consumption of alcohol
✓ Colds and flu
✓ Overeating
✓ Bad smells
✓ Food poisoning
✓ Motion sickness
✓ Migraine headaches

When to Seek Care

Even though nausea and vomiting are usually not serious, sometimes a trip to the doctor may be necessary. Seek medical attention immediately in the following situations.

📸 If you notice blood in the vomit. Blood may sometimes look like coffee grounds when partially digested.

🏥 If you get dehydrated (signs of dehydration include dry mouth, sticky saliva, and dark, yellow urine).

Continued on the following page...
Common Conditions

If you develop a stiff neck.

If you experience any chest pain.

If you have been vomiting for more than a few days and/or symptoms are becoming more frequent and severe.

Home Treatment
Treating nausea and vomiting in your home can be simple and effective. The following remedies can help calm your stomach, and help you feel better quickly.

- Refrain from eating or drinking for several hours. (You may attempt to eat small amounts of bland food like dry toast, water, crackers and rice).
- Drink cool, clear fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Avoid fatty, fried, or spicy foods as well as dairy items. Also avoid alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine.
- Drink small amounts of sugared soda (sugar can help calm the stomach).

Food Poisoning
Food poisoning is one of the most common causes of nausea and vomiting. In fact, the more than 250 existing foodborne diseases account for an estimated 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 5,200 deaths in the United States each year.

Symptoms of food poisoning often include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain.

Following simple guidelines on food preparation, handling, and storage can easily prevent the vast majority of foodborne illness. The following guidelines can help you avoid the nausea and vomiting associated with many foodborne illnesses.

- Keep foods hot or cold—room temperature is where many bacteria grow.
- Set your refrigerator between 34°F and 40°F. According to the FDA, 23 percent of household refrigerators are not cold enough.
- Defrost meats in the refrigerator or microwave.
- Cook hamburger/ground meats thoroughly.
- Don’t eat undercooked or raw eggs.
- Refrigerate foods immediately.
- Keep all cutting boards clean.

Treating Diarrhea
Diarrhea occurs when bowel movements are looser or more watery than normal. Diarrhea can be caused by a number of things including stomach flu, medications, food poisoning, or parasitic infection—just to name a few.

Thankfully, in most cases, treating diarrhea is straightforward. Treatment involves the following.

- Stay hydrated. Make sure to take small, frequent drinks of water several times a day. If possible, it is recommended that you drink at least one liter of water each hour.
- Eat mild foods. Try the B.R.A.T diet. Bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast can be easily digested, and are used by many hospitals to control diarrhea. Avoid fatty foods, coffee, and milk products until your diarrhea subsides.
- Consider OTCs. Over-the-counter medications such as Pepto-Bismol or Imodium may slow diarrhea, however, they won’t speed recovery. Work with your healthcare provider to determine what’s right for you.
**Take The Self-Care Quiz**

The quiz below is designed to test your knowledge on the information presented in this section. Use this quiz as a tool to better understand how to care for yourself and others.

**True**  **False**

1. Antibiotics are the most effective treatment for the common cold, as well as the flu.
2. An untreated case of strep throat could result in rheumatic fever.
3. A fever of 104°F or higher that persists longer than 2 hours, needs medical attention.
4. Hand washing is the most effective measure for preventing the spread of disease.
5. A serious eye infection, or even blindness can result if a cold sore infects a person’s eyes.

*Answers can be found inside this section.*