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Ministry of Public Health
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المبادئ الإرشادية السريرية لدولة قطر
NATIONAL CLINICAL GUIDELINES FOR QATAR

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS & CAREGIVERS

What you need to know about Common Cold

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WHAT IS COMMON COLD?

'Common Cold' is a term used to describe a common condition in which people experience a combination of the following symptoms:

- A runny nose
- A blocked nose
- A mild sore throat
- A cough
- Mild headaches
- A fever
- Generally feeling unwell

Young children may also experience:

- Irritability
- Poor feeding
- Diarrhoea



ANTIBIOTICS DON'T WORK ON VIRUSES

Antibiotics are medicines that can kill bacteria but have no effect on viruses. They are therefore NOT used to treat the Common Cold.

Antibiotics can also cause a lot of side effects and can sometimes be harmful.

Using too many antibiotics can lead to bacteria becoming resistant to their effects (**Antibiotic Resistance**). This in turn results in infections that are difficult or impossible to treat and is a growing problem in Qatar.

ANTIBIOTICS CAN BE USED IN CERTAIN PEOPLE TO PREVENT COMPLICATIONS FROM DEVELOPING. ANTIBIOTICS DO NOT HELP PEOPLE WHO ARE OTHERWISE HEALTHY

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A COLD?

The symptoms of cold will usually be at their worst 3-5 days after you first become unwell. Thereafter, they should gradually improve, although a cough can sometimes last for up to 2-3 weeks.

There is no specific treatment needed for most healthy people, but you can buy medicine from a pharmacy to help with some of the symptoms. These are:

- Paracetamol
- Ibuprofen
- Topical Nasal Decongestants (for up to 5 days use)

CHECK WITH YOUR PHARMACIST TO MAKE SURE IT IS SAFE FOR YOU TO USE THESE MEDICINES

Be sure to rest if you feel unwell and drink enough water to stay hydrated.

Lozenges and warm drinks can help soothe a sore throat and inhaling the steam from a shower can help relieve a blocked nose. Use saline (salt water) drops for blocked nose in babies.

WHEN SHOULD I SEE A DOCTOR?

See your primary care doctor, if your or child's symptoms are not getting better after 3-5 days, or if you feel you are getting worse.



The symptoms of common cold can sometimes lead to complications in some people. See your doctor if you have any of the following:

- Aged over 65 years
- Child less than 1 year
- Pregnant
- Diabetes mellitus
- Lung disease
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Liver disease
- Neurological (brain) problems
- Problems with your immune system



SYMPTOMS TO WATCH OUT FOR

The symptoms of cold can also be similar to those of serious illnesses.

If you, or your child, have any of the following symptoms, call an ambulance or go immediately to an Emergency Department or Pediatric Emergency Centre:

- DIFFICULTY BREATHING
- BLUISH-COLOURED LIPS
- DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING
- DROOLING
- DRY EYES
- DRY MOUTH
- LOW URINE VOLUME
- FEVER WITH COLD HANDS OR FEET • NECK STIFFNESS
- PAIN ON LOOKING AT BRIGHT LIGHTS
- SEVERE HEADACHE
- A SKIN RASH

THE FOLLOWING MEASURES ARE NOT PROVEN TO BE BENEFICIAL IN TREATING COMMON COLD:

- Cough syrups
- Cough suppressants (containing codeine)
- Echinacea
- Chinese herbal remedies

ALWAYS TELL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU ARE TAKING ANY HERBAL OR HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS AND ANY OTHER MEDICINES YOU HAVE BEEN PRESCRIBED

The viruses that cause the Common Cold are spread by coughing, sneezing, kissing or touch.

To prevent the people around you from catching the Cold from you, or your child, should do the following:

- **Wash your hands** with soap and water, especially after blowing your nose.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** when coughing or sneezing.
- **Don't share towels** with other people.
- **Avoid shaking hands**, hugging or kissing others.
- **Don't allow children to share toys** if one of the children has a Cold.

TAKE TIME OFF WORK OR SCHOOL IF YOU, OR YOUR CHILD, HAVE A FEVER TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Ministry of Public Health has published a National Clinical Guideline advising doctors on how to treat patients with Common Cold.

The Guideline is available to the public from the MOPH website:

www.moph.gov.qa

