

Is it a cold or do I have the Flu?

With the cold and flu season upon us, we at PFP wanted to offer advice for home remedies and what you can do before you call for an appointment.

PREVENTION: The most effective method for preventing colds is to avoid touching the nose or eyes after the hands have been contaminated with a cold virus. Thorough hand washing with soap and water can greatly reduce virus on the hands, and as a result, reduce contamination of objects such as door knobs, handrails, and light switches as well as hand-to-hand virus transmissions.

If you happen to catch a "cold" and experience some of the following symptoms, here are some over-the-counter and home remedies you can try:

Analgesics: Acetaminophen-Ibuprofen. Most mild aches, sore throat, and fever may be relieved with Tylenol or Advil/Motrin. For adults only, Aspirin can also be used.**

Decongestants: Adults with nasal congestion can find relief by using a product that contains a decongestant.**

Cough suppressants: For adults, a cough medicine should only be used if your cough interferes with sleep or work.**

Drink more water and other fluids to prevent dehydration.

Eat a nutritious diet and be sure to get enough sleep so your body has enough energy to fight the virus.

Use a vaporizer or humidifier while sleeping to help loosen mucus and reduced throat, nose irritation and coughing.

Gargle with warm salt water - 1/2 teaspoon dissolved in 8 ounces of warm water to soothe a sore throat.

Use a Netty Pot with a saltwater wash or a nasal saltwater spray or solution to cleanse and dry the nasal passage. The aid of vitamins and herbs - zinc, echinacea, vitamin C - in preventing colds remains unproven.

**** note:** Reading the package label carefully will provide information to help you make an informed decision regarding if the over-the-counter medication is safe for you to take; given your own personal health history and medications you are already taking. If you are unsure or confused, do not hesitate to call our office.

There is no known cure for the cold. Colds are caused by viruses, and antibiotics- which fight bacteria - will not help. Antibiotics used for the common cold contributes to the problem of bacterial drug resistance. Most cold symptoms last 7- 10 days. If your symptoms persist, you develop shortness of breathe or a fever, please call to make an appointment to be seen. Patients that have other serious health conditions should contact the office at onset of symptoms.

How do I know when I have a cold, allergies or the flu?

Colds, flu and allergies share some symptoms, but there are ways to tell them part. Most colds begin with a sore throat, sneezing, and runny or stuffy nose, followed by a cough. If fever, headache, fatigue, and muscle pain are present, they are generally mild. Colds usually develop over the course of a few days and clear up in a week or two.

Fever, headache, fatigue and muscle pain are the usual symptoms of the flu and are often severe.

Common allergy symptoms include sneezing, itchy nose severe runny nose, nasal congestion, and itchy, watery eyes. Allergy symptoms begin suddenly and do not go away until the allergen is gone; symptoms may continue for hours or weeks.