



Newsletter

February 2018
Issue 22, Vol. 1



Holiday Road Safety
Nursing Talk
The "Don'ts" of Charting

The Flu:

What To Do If You Get Sick



How do I know if I have the flu?

You may have the flu if you have some or all of these symptoms:

- fever*
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue
- sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

What should I do if I get sick?

Most people with the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms, in most cases, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care.

If, however, you have symptoms of flu and are in a high risk group, or are very sick or worried about your illness, contact your health care provider (doctor, physician assistant, etc.).

Certain people are at high risk of serious flu-related complications (including young children, people 65 and older, pregnant women and people with certain medical conditions). This is true both for seasonal flu and novel flu virus infections. (For a full list of people at high risk of flu-related complications, see People at High Risk of Developing Flu-Related Complications). If you are in a high risk group and develop flu symptoms, it's best for you to contact your doctor early in your illness. Remind them about your high risk status for flu. CDC recommends that people at high risk for complications should get antiviral treatment as early as possible, because benefit is greatest if treatment is started within 2 days after illness onset.

Do I need to go the emergency room if I am only a little sick?

No. The emergency room should be used for people who are very sick. You should not go to the emergency room if you are only mildly ill.

If you have the emergency warning signs of flu sickness, you should go to the emergency room. If you get sick with flu symptoms and are at high risk of flu complications or you are concerned about your illness, call your health

care provider for advice. If you go to the emergency room and you are not sick with the flu, you may catch it from people who do have it.

What are the emergency warning signs of flu sickness?

In children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In addition to the signs above, get medical help right away for any infant who has any of these signs:

- Being unable to eat
- Has trouble breathing
- Has no tears when crying
- Significantly fewer wet diapers than normal

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The Flu:

What To Do If You Get Sick

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Are there medicines to treat the flu?

Yes. There are drugs your doctor may prescribe for treating the flu called “antivirals.” These drugs can make you better faster and may also prevent serious complications. See Treatment – Antiviral Drugs for more information.

How long should I stay home if I’m sick?

CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or other necessities. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®. You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

What should I do while I’m sick?

Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. If you must leave home, for example to get medical care, wear a facemask if you have one, or cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Wash your hands often to keep from spreading flu to others.

source: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/takingcare.htm>

In adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

CPR Class

Date	Time	Location
March 7, 2018	1000-1300	1660 N. Farnsworth Ave., Suite 3 Aurora, IL 60505

CPR spots are scheduled on a first come first served basis.
Don't delay. **Reserve your spot today!**

Nursing Talk

WHO IS YOUR LIFELINE?

Dear Cassandra,

Each night when I get off my shift at 3:00 A.M., I walk to my car and then drive home. The streets are deserted, and most of the gas stations are closed. I always have my cell phone with me so I could call for help if I needed to. Still, I worry about what could happen.

Worried in Waukegan

Dear Worried,

Let me tell you stories about two American Home Health nurses. The two stories illustrate the determination and grit that people can exhibit in times of crisis.

A pediatric private duty nurse named Donna was leaving the client’s home at the end of her shift at 3:00 A.M. It was Winter, and snow had fallen on the ground, sidewalks, and front porch. As Donna was walking off the porch, she slipped on ice and her feet flew out from under her. She landed on her back at the bottom of the steps. Her cell phone landed in a nearby snowdrift. Yikes! Who would even notice her lying there? Fortunately, Donna was able to feel around in the snow drift, and she found her cell phone. She was even able to get up off of the ground and make it to her car.

Beryl was a pediatric private duty nurse whose client lived in the city. The streets and sidewalks were coated with ice when she got off her shift. Walking ever so carefully, she almost made it to her car. Then she lost her balance, and she slid under her car. The street was deserted, and no one was around to help her. Beryl, being a determined soul, grabbed onto rocks and asphalt under the car and, like a wiggle worm, pulled herself out from under the car.

Sometimes a person has to use a lifeline. Merriam-Webster defines lifeline in the traditional sense as “a rope used for saving the life of someone (such as someone who has fallen into water).” If you are a fan of quiz shows on television, you are familiar with the word “lifeline” in a more abstract sense as “something which provides help or support that is needed for success or survival.”

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Common Cold

Protect Yourself and Others

Nursing Talk

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Before the invention of phones and cell phones, people often relied on their family members or neighbors to get help. Here's an example. A farmer had set up a ladder and climbed a tree to cut broken limbs. His young son was watching his dad work. Suddenly, the ladder fell to the ground, and the farmer was stuck up in the tree. He instructed his son to go to the next farm to ask the neighbor to come set up the ladder. The boy did as he was told, and the neighbor came to rescue the farmer. You can be sure that the neighbor never let the farmer forget that event!

City dwellers sometimes need help from neighbors. Once I had to use some creativity and two neighbors to rescue me. It was around 7:00 A.M. on a Winter day. I was trying to get to work on time. Since we did not have an electric garage door opener, I had to get out of the car to close the garage door. I saw ice on the driveway, but it did not occur to me that it would be slippery. As I got out of my car, I fell in a seated position right next to the car. I could not get up! Pulling a floor mat from the car, I put it on the ice. Using the floor mat, I was able to get in a kneeling position, but I could not get into the car!

I looked at the steering wheel and thought about blowing the car's horn. I prayed that somebody would hear me if I blew the horn enough times in an uneven sequence of blasts. Fortunately, the neighbor across the street heard the car horn. She called my next-door neighbor, who came over to investigate. I told him to go inside the house to wake up my son. The two of them were able to lift me up off the driveway and seat me in my car. Then off I went to work.

It is impossible for you to imagine and prevent all accidents. Keep your phone with you. Remember that you can call 911 at any time, day or night. The 911 operator will send the police or firemen or paramedics to help you. If that fails, be strong. Keep calm. With determination and grit, you can overcome almost any obstacle.

Cassandra

We invite you to submit questions for this column. E-mail edwardlara@ahhc-1.com.



Sore throat and runny nose are usually the first signs of a cold, followed by coughing and sneezing. Most people recover in about 7-10 days. You can help reduce your risk of getting a cold: wash your hands often, avoid close contact with sick people, and don't touch your face with unwashed hands.

Common colds are the main reason that children miss school and adults miss work. Each year in the United States, there are millions of cases of the common cold. Adults have an average of 2-3 colds per year, and children have even more.

Most people get colds in the winter and spring, but it is possible to get a cold any time of the year. Symptoms usually include:

- sore throat
- runny nose
- coughing
- sneezing
- headaches
- body aches

Most people recover within about 7-10 days. However, people with weakened immune systems, asthma, or respiratory conditions may develop serious illness, such as bronchitis or pneumonia.

How to Protect Yourself

Viruses that cause colds can spread from in-

fecting people to others through the air and close personal contact. You can also get infected through contact with stool (poop) or respiratory secretions from an infected person. This can happen when you shake hands with someone who has a cold, or touch a surface, like a doorknob, that has respiratory viruses on it, then touch your eyes, mouth, or nose.

You can help reduce your risk of getting a cold:

- *Wash your hands often with soap and water.* Wash them for 20 seconds, and help young children do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Viruses that cause colds can live on your hands, and regular handwashing can help protect you from getting sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Viruses that cause colds can enter your body this way and make you sick.
- Stay away from people who are sick. Sick people can spread viruses that cause the common cold through close contact with others.

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Common Cold

Protect Yourself and Others

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How to Feel Better

There is no cure for a cold. To feel better, you should get lots of rest and drink plenty of fluids. Over-the-counter medicines may help ease symptoms but will not make your cold go away any faster. Always read the label and use medications as directed. Talk to your doctor before giving your child nonprescription cold medicines, since some medicines contain ingredients that are not recommended for children. Learn more about symptom relief of upper respiratory infections, including colds.

Antibiotics will not help you recover from a cold caused by a respiratory virus. They do not work against viruses, and they may make it harder for your body to fight future bacterial infections if you take them unnecessarily. Learn more about when antibiotics work.

When to See a Doctor

You should call your doctor if you or your child has one or more of these conditions:

- symptoms that last more than 10 days
- symptoms that are severe or unusual
- if your child is younger than 3 months of age and has a fever or is lethargic

You should also call your doctor right away if you are at high risk for serious flu complications and get flu symptoms such as fever, chills, and muscle or body aches. People at high risk for flu complications include young children (younger than 5 years old), adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease.

Your doctor can determine if you or your child has a cold or the flu and can recommend therapy to help with symptoms.

Causes of the Common Cold

Many different respiratory viruses can cause the common cold, but rhinoviruses are the most common. Rhinoviruses can also trigger asthma attacks and have been linked to sinus and ear infections. Other viruses that can cause

colds include respiratory syncytial virus, human parainfluenza viruses, adenovirus, human coronaviruses, and human metapneumovirus.

Know the Difference between Common Cold and Flu

The flu, which is caused by influenza viruses, also spreads and causes illness around the same time as the common cold. Because these two illnesses have similar symptoms, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. In general, flu symptoms are worse than the common cold and can include fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue (tiredness). Flu can also have very serious complications. CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccination as the first and best way to prevent the flu. If you get the flu, antiviral drugs may be a treatment option.

More Information

- Common Cold and Runny Nose, CDC [<https://www.cdc.gov/getsmart/community/for-patients/common-illnesses/colds.html>]
- Common Cold, U.S. National Library of Medicine [<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001698/>]
- Handwashing: Clean Hands Saves Lives, CDC [<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>]
- Seasonal Influenza (Flu) CDC [<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>]

source: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/rhinoviruses/index.html>

How to Protect Others

If you have a cold, you should follow these tips to help prevent spreading it to other people:

- Stay at home while you are sick
- Avoid close contact with others, such as hugging, kissing, or shaking hands
- Move away from people before coughing or sneezing
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue then throw it away, or cough and sneeze into your upper shirt sleeve, completely covering your mouth and nose
- Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, and objects such as toys and doorknobs

There is no vaccine to protect you against the common cold.

WANTED 466 PEOPLE

TO READ THE BLOG EACH WEEK

MUST BE CURIOUS, INTELLIGENT,
THOUGHTFUL INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE OPEN TO
NEW IDEAS. LEARN NEW NURSING PROCE-
DURES, COLLECT RECIPES, READ
MONEY-SAVING TIPS, WATCH VIDEOS, ENJOY
RERUNS OF LETTERS TO CASSANDRA,
AND MORE.

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