

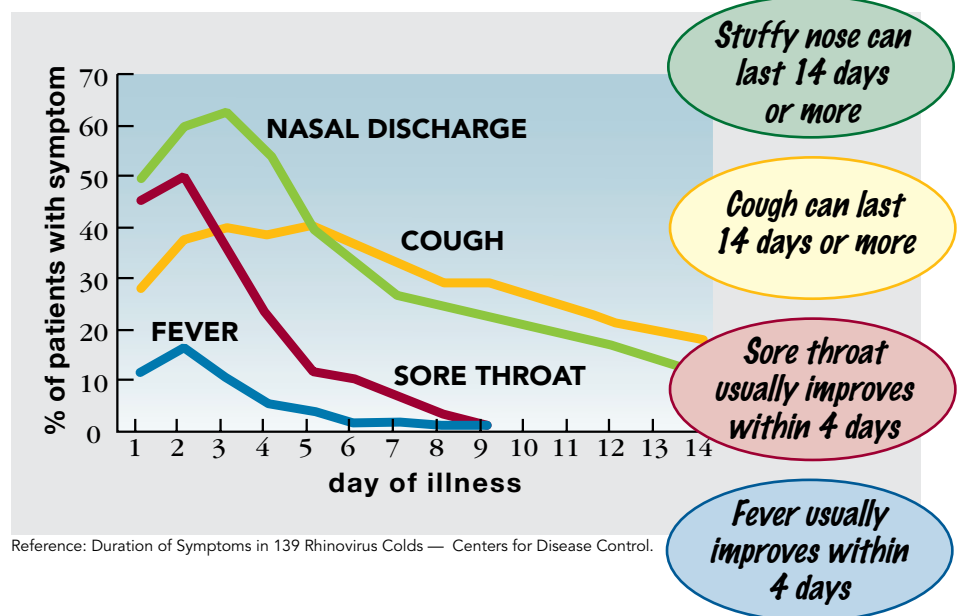
Cool Tips For Colds and Flu

4 steps to feeling better

Sniffles. Cough. Sore throat. Fever. Colds and flu can make you feel miserable. Although the flu vaccine is your best protection from the flu, it is still possible to get a cold or flu-like illness after being vaccinated. If you do get a cold or the flu, here are some steps you can take:

Step 1. Understand Your Symptoms - Is it normal that I still feel sick?

- Cough and stuffy nose may last 2 weeks or more.
- Fever and sore throat usually improve within 4 days.
- Yellow or green mucus is common when you have a cold and is usually NOT due to a bacterial infection that requires antibiotics.
- Sinus pain is common when you have a cold. It is usually NOT due to a sinus infection that requires antibiotics.



Step 2. Know How to Treat Cold and Flu Symptoms

- The best treatments for cold and flu are rest, fluids, and time.
- Antibiotics do not work for colds or flu, which are caused by viruses. Antibiotics only kill bacteria.
- Over-the-counter medications can help! They are available without a prescription at Kaiser Permanente pharmacies or your local drug store.

Learn more about **over-the-counter medications** for your symptoms.



Need a note for a work or school absence? Let us know when you call the Appointment and Advice Line, and we can help: **1-866-454-8855**

Step 3. Know How to Use Over-the-Counter Cold & Flu Medicines

Over-the-counter (non-prescription) medications can ease your symptoms and help you feel better.



Stuffy Nose

- Saline nose spray (Ocean)
- Sinus rinse kits
- Oxymetazoline nose spray (Afrin) Do not use for more than 3 days in a row.
- Pseudoephedrine tablets (Sudafed) Ask Pharmacy staff for assistance with products containing pseudoephedrine.

Runny Nose & Sneezing

- Antihistamines (less drowsy)
 - Loratadine (Claritin)
 - Cetirizine (Zyrtec)
 - Fexofenadine (Allegra)



Cough

- Guaifenesin + Dextromethorphan (Robitussin DM, Mucinex DM)



Sore Throat

- Throat lozenges and sprays (Cepacol, Ricola)



Pain & Fever

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)

Read and follow the directions on labels carefully

Know what is in your over-the-counter medications. Ingredients used for fever and pain like aspirin, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen are included in other over-the-counter and prescription products. Check the labels and make sure you aren't taking multiple medicines with the same ingredients.

Children under the age of 4. Check age recommendations on children's products. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cautions that cough and cold medicines should NOT be given to children under 4 years of age, unless recommended by a health care provider.

People 20 and under. Do not give aspirin or products containing aspirin to persons younger than 20 years of age.

Pregnant women. Pregnant women should not use aspirin or ibuprofen.

Step 4. Know when to call Kaiser Permanente

Call our Appointment and Advice Line - **1-866-454-8855** if you have:

- Trouble breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Fever of 100.4° F or higher for 3 days or more
- Cough that lasts more than 3 weeks

Want more information? Check out our online Cold and Flu Tool: kp.org/mydoctor/flu

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse the medications or products mentioned. Any trade names listed are for easy identification only.