

# Colds & flu

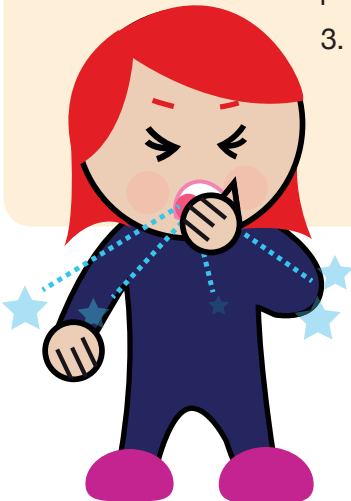
Most of us will probably have a cold this winter and some of us will have flu.



Antibiotics don't work on colds. Antibiotics only work on bacterial infections but colds are caused by viruses. These viruses can be spread through droplets from coughs and sneezes or transferred on a person's fingers. The main symptoms of winter viruses are coughing, sneezing, blocked nose, sore throat, headache and a slight temperature. If these are the only symptoms you have, it's unlikely that your GP will be able to do anything - in most cases, antibiotics (which are used to treat bacterial infections) aren't necessary.

## Don't pass it on

1. **CATCH IT** Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.
2. **BIN IT** Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.
3. **KILL IT** Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.



## Treating colds & flu

Get plenty of rest and eat well. You may want to visit your local pharmacy, where you can get advice on how to manage the symptoms and buy over-the-counter medicine. Some of the remedies combine painkillers with decongestants, which help to manage symptoms. Painkillers, like paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin, can really help if you have a cold, but aspirin shouldn't be given to children under 16 years of age. Decongestants help to reduce the swelling inside your nose so you can breathe more easily.



## Get the flu jab

Flu is a lot more serious than an ordinary cold and some people are at more risk of severe illness if they catch it. The seasonal flu vaccination (flu jab) can stop you getting the most common forms of flu. You should speak to your GP surgery about getting the flu jab if you:

- Are 65 years old or over
- Are pregnant
- Have a serious medical condition
- Are living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility
- Are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill
- Are a frontline health or social care worker
- Are pregnant

the age of one, try a warm drink of lemon and honey. Never give cough medicines to children under the age



For more information, help and support go to [www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk](http://www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk) or visit NHS Choices at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Choose the right care**

# What to do next...



## Choose care at home if...

- You have a cold or flu
- our GP is unlikely to be able to help
- Antibiotics won't help as they don't work on viruses



## Choose your Pharmacy or GP if...

- You need some over-the-counter cold or flu remedies, decongestants or paracetamol - your pharmacist can help with this
- You become short of breath - call your GP or GP out-of-hours service
- You develop a rash - call your GP or GP out-of-hours service
- You develop neck pain/stiffness - call your GP or GP out-of-hours service
- There are any changes in your level of alertness (drowsy, irritable etc) - call your GP or GP out-of-hours service
- Your temperature remains above 38.6C two hours after you've taken paracetamol
- You are still concerned about symptoms after 1 week - contact your GP



## Call 999 A&E if...

- You have chest pain
- You have severe difficulty breathing



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## Choose the right care