

# COLDS AND FLU

There is no cure for a cold or flu as they are caused by viruses, but the symptoms can be relieved so that they are not noticeable. These symptoms include runny/blocked nose, sneezing/coughing, aches and pains, high temperature and sore throat. The flu comes on suddenly, whereas a cold develops over several hours.

**Flu** is a much more 'hard hitting' illness than a cold and will usually leave the sufferer confined to bed for a few days. The symptoms of a **cold**, while unpleasant, usually allow the sufferer to continue his or her normal daily activities. Symptoms of a cold are generally confined to the head, while a patient with the flu will feel sick all over. The treatment is the same for each condition regardless. Colds and flu generally last for about 7 days at most and need no specific treatment other than painkillers and simple measures such as decongestant rubs or vaporisers. Antibiotics are of no benefit.

## TREATMENT:

The age of the patient will influence your choice of products.

- **Runny nose and congestion** are both treated by decongestants. **Sneezing** is treated by an antihistamine. A **cough** may be due to irritation or to post nasal drip. An expectorant such as Whelehans Special Cough mixture will help. **Headaches** are due to inflammation of the sinuses and nasal passages and muscular or joint pain is common - this will need a painkiller. **Sinus pain** worsens on leaning forward or lying down and may develop into an infection. **High temperature** is more common in the flu than with a cold - paracetamol is very useful to bring down high temperature. A **sore throat** is usually the first sign of a cold, STREPSILS<sup>®</sup> lozenges will help.

## PRECAUTIONS

Many cold and flu remedies contain a number of drugs, so anyone on prescription medication should speak to the pharmacist. Anyone who is **pregnant**, has **heart disease** or **lung disease** or the very **young** or **old** should also be seen by the pharmacist.

So, for example, if you suffer from **High Blood Pressure** it is best to avoid many cold and flu remedies which contain decongestants as these products tend to raise blood pressure. Examples of products which contain decongestants include NUROFEN COLD AND FLU<sup>®</sup>, BENYLIN4FLU<sup>®</sup>, NIGHT NURSE<sup>®</sup> and many more.

Asthmatics and people with stomach complaints such as stomach ulcers should avoid products which contain aspirin and aspirin derivatives. This is because aspirin can trigger

asthma attacks in some asthmatics and irritate stomach ulcers. Examples of these products include DISPRIN<sup>®</sup>, ANADIN<sup>®</sup> and NUROFEN COLD AND FLU<sup>®</sup>.

There are a vast number of preparations available for the treatment of cold and flu symptoms, some of which are combination preparations and may be capable of treating many symptoms at once.

### **PRACTICAL POINTS:**

- The old fashioned advice (along with the excellent modern medication) - hot drinks, a warm bed and an early night can work wonders.
- If you suffer with colds and flu regularly you should take a multi-vitamin or herbal supplement to boost your immune system, for example **ECHINACEA**
- Colds and flu are spread by droplets in the air but can also be spread by hand to hand contact. Frequent hand washing and covering your nose when sneezing can help prevent you getting and passing your cold on to others.
- Although the flu usually lasts less than a week, tiredness may persist for weeks after other symptoms have cleared up. **Whelehans Traditional Tonic** contains B vitamins and is a very useful in relieving fatigue and help to speed up your recovery.

**Disclaimer: Consult with your healthcare professional before making any changes recommended especially if you have a medical condition**

**For comprehensive and free health advice and information call in to Whelehans or log on to [www.whelehans.ie](http://www.whelehans.ie)**