

Colds & Flu

Both colds and flu are infections of the nose, throat and lungs and are caused by viruses—germs that are not killed by antibiotics. Colds usually begin slowly, lasting 2–7 days starting with scratchy or sore throat, sneezing, runny nose and cough. The Flu begins with a sudden headache, dry cough, aching muscles, and extreme fatigue. Good hand washing will help prevent the spread of both cold and flu germs. Remember, if you have a cold or the flu, antibiotics will not work for you. A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect against the flu. Others with chronic respiratory conditions should be vaccinated against pneumococcal pneumonia. If you need assistance obtaining a flu shot, contact the Regional Center @ 213.383.1300.

Here are some things to consider during cold and flu season:

1. Both Staff and Clients should get a flu shot during the months of October — January. Remember, the earlier the better.
2. Make sure to wash hands frequently using soap and warm water.
3. Cover your mouth or nose when you cough or sneeze to protect others.
4. Have tissues handy and be sure to throw used tissues in the waste basket.
5. Eat balanced meals, drink lots of fluids, excluding sodas and other drinks high in sugar.
6. Get plenty of rest and stay home from work or school if you are sick.
7. Ask your doctor about the pneumonia vaccine if you have chronic respiratory condition and have not already been vaccinated.
8. Contact your doctor if you have other ongoing medical conditions or prolonged symptoms or fever.

There are many over the counter (OTC) medications to treat cold or flu symptoms. Always consult a doctor before considering OTC medication for a child under 2 years old or someone with an existing medical condition. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), children or teenagers who may have the flu should **NOT** be given aspirin or medicines that contain aspirin.

For More Information about Colds and Flu:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work
<http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Get Smart Program: More Info about Flu
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

County of Los Angeles, Public Health: It's Not Flu as Usual.
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/chs/phcenters.htm>

KEY POINTS:

1. Wash hands often and well
2. Get your flu shot early
3. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze

