

# UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION

## What is Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)?

A URI is another name for the common cold. The majority of URIs are due to viral infections of the upper respiratory tract and don't require antibiotics. Most often, URIs are contagious and can spread from person to person by inhaling respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing. Symptoms can last from 2-14 days.

### What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Clear, runny nose
- Headache
- General aches, pains
- Fatigue
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Sneezing

### How is it treated?

Antibiotics may be used to treat a secondary infection, but they do not treat URIs. It is important to get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids. There are also medications that are available with and without a prescription to treat the symptoms associated with URIs. Common medications include:

- Antihistamines-dries secretions in the nose and lungs

- Decongestants-decreases stuffiness and pressure
- Cough suppressants-decreases cough
- Expectorants-thins mucus secretions
- Tylenol and/or Ibuprofen-reduces fever
- Steroids

Always read labels carefully and only use medications as directed.

### **How long does a URI last?**

A URI can last from 2-14 days. However, if symptoms are worse after 7-10 days, it is important to follow up with your healthcare provider.

### **How are URIs prevented?**

Frequent hand washing is important to prevent the spread of URIs. Be sure to wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol based hand sanitizer. Inhaling infected particles in the air can also spread colds/respiratory viral infections, so monitor close contacts who are coughing or sneezing. Always wipe down common surfaces with disinfectant spray and do not share cups or utensils.



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