

WHY...?

How long...?

How...?

WHAT...?

HELP!

Cold

Upper
respiratory
tract
infection

Tomar Antibióticos



No es un juego



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What is a cold?

A **cold** is each of the episodes of nasal obstruction, increase of mucus and cough that we often have during winter and the reason why some children are called "snotty-nosed".

Cold may be accompanied by fever, which is more frequent in younger children. These kind of respiratory infections are self-limited, in other words, they will heal on their own in a few days.

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My child has a cold, when should I visit my paediatrician?

Colds are almost entirely caused by viruses. It is estimated that there are more than 200 different types of viruses involved.

Infection is spread from an infected child to a healthy child through secretions from the airways (mucus) which is expelled into the air via cough or sneeze, or through objects contaminated by these secretions. The entry point can be mouth, nose or eyes. It has been proven that **hands are a very important transmission medium of respiratory infections.** Regarding children, the spread of the disease is facilitated by sharing objects and licking toys, and also by the propensity to direct contact with hands and face (even with teeth).

How is it spread?



What are the most common symptoms?

Common cold starts with **nasal congestion and throat irritation**. After a few hours, **sneeze and mucus can appear, often accompanied by other symptoms such as fever, general malaise, headache, lack of appetite, muscle aches and cough.**

Fever usually lasts no longer than 3 days, nasal and throat symptoms disappear in one week, but cough is more persistent and can last 2 or 3 weeks.

Initially, nasal mucus is transparent, but it thickens until it becomes whitish mucus, which later on becomes yellow or even green, so mucus can last a few days. This is not a sign of complication, neither a sign of needing antibiotics. It is also normal that children eat less than usual.



Firstly, **because they are in contact with other children** (park, nursery or school) and adults with a cold that can transmit the cold virus.

Secondly, **because their defence system “does not know” all microbes**, so they can be infected more easily.

It is estimated that a normal adult can have 1 or 2 colds per year, and a child can have 5 or 6, although it depends on which childhood step they are on, with a maximum peak incidence on the first years of schooling or nursery attendance. After a couple of years, the annual number of colds clearly decreases.

Children do not get a cold if they go out into the playground, as cold spreads more easily in a closed room (classroom), because contact with other children is closer and, also, because there is less ventilation and coughs and sneezes expel the virus into the air, thus other healthy children inhale it.

Why do children catch colds so often?



How is it treated?

The main objective of colds treatment is to **alleviate symptoms and prevent complications**, having into account the spontaneous healing of this disease.

One of the most effective measures is nasal irrigation with physiological saline solution. Using medicines, excluding analgesics-antypiretics (such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, etc.) in case of fever or malaise, does not produce notable effects for their usage to be generalised.

Recommended measures:

- Make them drink plenty of fluids, above all water.
- Keep their room well ventilated and prevent abrupt changes in temperature.
- Humidifying the air in the environment can help decongesting the nose; keeping a clear, dust and tobacco smoke free environment.

Are antibiotics needed for colds?

No. It is important to note that **using antibiotics to treat colds does not shorten its duration or reduce complications**, so they can favour the development of medicine resistance.



There is not an effective vaccine for common cold.

Annual influenza vaccination only protects against flu virus (virus influenzae A and B); it does not protect against other possible virus causing catarrhal phases. It is recommended for children with chronic diseases, and some people recommend cold vaccination for younger children (at least 6 months old) if they go to nursery.

Washing hands frequently is one of the most effective habits in order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Another preventive strategy, more difficult to carry out, is to avoid exposure to people with a cold.

Can it be prevented?

Cold with no complications heals by itself and does not need medicines. Parents' vigilance should focus on the detection of complications.

Fever lasting more than 3 days, earache, breathing difficulty, yellow or green nasal mucus lasting more than 10 days, or lack of energy should be considered warning symptoms, so you must visit your paediatrician.

On other occasions, common sense or the desire to solve doubts will make you visit health professionals.

My child has a cold, when should I visit my paediatrician?





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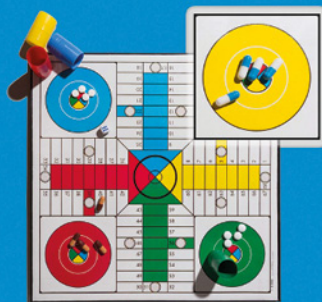
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