Colds – Upper Respiratory Infections

The average adult has 2-3 colds per year which can be caused by at least 100 different types of viruses. Unfortunately, there is no magic cure, so efforts are directed toward maintaining comfort.

Comfort Care:

**Rest:** Rest reduces physical stress on your body thus allowing more energy to go toward fighting your cold and preventing complications.

**Hydrate:** 8-10 glasses of fluid (daily) will help loosen secretions, reduce coughing and congestion, and soothe sore throats. Moisture from humidifiers, hot showers or salt water nasal spray can be helpful.

**Gargle:** Warm salt water gargle (1/4 tsp in 8 oz) will soothe and promote healing of sore throats as well as loosen any postnasal congestion/drainage.

**Nutrition:** Small frequent meals rich in protein and plenty of fresh fruit.

**Medications:** Tylenol or Ibuprofen can be used for headache or minor body ache. Mucinex-D 2 tabs every 12 hours or Sudafed 60mg 4 times a day will relieve sinus, nasal, and ear congestion. NOTE: If you have high blood pressure, diabetes, thyroid disease, or take prescription medications, please see your Health Care Specialist before taking any over the counter drugs.

**Wash your hands:** Washing hands or using hand sanitizer frequently especially after touching your eyes, mouth, or nose helps prevent the spread of the virus to other people. Practice good hand washing before you eat, after using the bathroom, and after shaking hands.

**Stop smoking:** Smoking paralyzes the tiny hairs which work to clean out mucous and dust from the breathing passages. If you smoke, you are more likely to catch colds or to have trouble getting rid of one.

**Return to the health center if the following occurs:**
- Fever over 101 lasting longer than 48 hours
- Worsening cough with productive green/yellow phlem
- Sore throat lasting longer than 3 days
- Cold symptoms lasting beyond 10 days
- Chest pain, or pain or difficulty with breathing
- Earache, facial pain, swollen glands