



Viral Upper Respiratory Infection in Adults

Guideline History

Date Approved	11/00, 11/02, 11/04, 01/07
Date Revised	
Date Reviewed	11/00, 11/02, 11/04, 12/06
Next Review Date	01/09

VIRAL UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION (VURI) IN ADULTS

- Education
- Prevention of VURI's
- Management of VURI's

Signs and Symptoms Reported:

- Upper Respiratory Symptoms
- Sore Throat
- Rhinorrhea
- Post Nasal Mucus
- Cough
- Fever, usually of $< 102^{\circ}$; lasting < 72 hours
- Hoarseness

A viral upper respiratory infection (common cold) is a self-limited illness typically lasting 5 to 14 days manifested by rhinorrhea, cough, and fever. This fever generally lasts less than three days and does not exceed 102° F

Triage for more serious Illness

- Symptoms present > 7 day-10 days
- Distinctly biphasic course (sudden worsening)
- Severe headache &/or facial pain
- Ear pain or drainage from ear
- Severe sore throat, unable to swallow
- Fever $> 102^{\circ}$, shaking, chills, or sweats
- SOB or wheezing
- Chest Pain
- Bloody sputum
- Stiff neck
- Persistent vomiting
- Rash
- High-Risk for complications: (immunosuppressed, COPD, asthma, diabetes, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, dialysis, neuromuscular disorder)

NO

Counsel regarding home care or evaluate and treat symptoms, advise regarding signs of secondary illness

YES

Evaluate for severe viral illness, bacterial infection (strep pharyngitis, bacterial sinusitis, bronchitis, pneumonia) or influenza

Treatment Options

- For aches, fever: Acetaminophen, ibuprofen, naproxen
- For nasal congestion: Saline irrigations, Pseudoephedrine (e.g., Sudafed) 60 mg q 4-6 hr, up to 4-doses/24 hr, or short-term oxymetazoline (Afrin) nasal spray
- For sore throat: Phenol-based sprays or lozenges (Chloraseptic, others)
- For cough: Dextromethorphan +/- guaifenesin

Triage Form For Viral Upper Respiratory Infection in Adults

Physician _____
Pt. Name: _____ Age: _____ Date _____
Identification Number (Med Record#) _____ Time _____
Allergies: _____

Signs/Symptoms:

Cough Yes ___ No ___
Sputum production Yes ___ No ___ Color _____
Congestion:

** Sputum color alone does not necessarily indicate bacterial infection requiring antibiotics. Bloody sputum should be investigated.

Head Yes ___ No ___
Chest Yes ___ No ___
Sore Throat Yes ___ No ___
Duration ___ Over the Counter Meds tried _____
Temp elevated* or <normal _____

Consideration for same day appointment if the following are present:

Chest pain with breathing No ___ Yes ___
Shortness of breath No ___ Yes ___
Inability to swallow liquids No ___ Yes ___
Shaking chills or sweats No ___ Yes ___
Wheezing No ___ Yes ___

Other Medical Consideration: Circle all that apply

Immunosuppressed (chemo, steroids, or HIV positive) _____
*Temp > 102 _____
COPD, Asthma, smoker _____
Diabetes _____
Congestive Heart Failure _____
Coronary Artery Disease _____
Dialysis _____

Outcomes:

Patient scheduled for an office visit _____ Pt. Requests prescription with no visit _____
Given ___ Not Given ___
Patient does not meet the protocol to be seen _____ (Indicate med below)
Asked to be seen anyway _____
Did not require an office visit. (Will call back if not better or if worse within 5 days) _____
Patient information sheet sent to patient for home treatment _____

Dx: VURI _____
Acute nasopharyngitis (common cold) 460.0

or Other _____
Acute sinusitis, NOS 461.9;
Acute bronchitis, 466.0
Strep Sore Throat, 034.0

Treatment:

Over the counter medication recommended _____
Cough Med: _____
Other: _____
Other test _____
Tried by _____

Prescription given (med name):
Antibiotic _____
Other: _____
Physician: _____

Date Revised: 11/2000, 11/2002

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)-Common Cold ADULT PATIENT EDUCATION SHEET

General Information: A URI is an infection of the upper respiratory areas of the body and is known by a variety of names including head cold, runny nose, sore throat, rhinitis, or common cold. The most frequent cause of colds is viral infections. Symptoms may include sneezing, nasal congestion, scratchy sore throat, headache, tiredness and general aches and pains, loss of sense of smell and taste, low-grade fever and coughing.

Colds are very contagious and easily spread by contact with someone who is infected. Exposure to the virus generally takes place two to three days before the symptoms appear, and may not respond to medication. Most colds last 7-14 days but this varies from person to person.

There are no specific treatments for a cold but there are some things that can be done for symptomatic relief. Humidifiers often help, especially when sleeping. Most non-prescription nasal sprays are associated with many problems and are generally not advised. An exception to this, however, is normal Saline nose drops, which can be obtained from your pharmacist. Gentle nose blowing is effective, and if forceful nose blowing is avoided, the nose tends to clear faster and stay clear longer. A decongestant may be used as directed. Balanced diet, adequate rest, and increased daily fluid intake all tend to speed resolution of your infection. If a sore throat is one of your symptoms, gargling with warm salt water, using throat lozenges, and drinking small amounts of cool liquids, such as Jello, ice chips, and popsicles, frequently provides some symptomatic relief. A mix of 1/2 honey and 1/2 lemon juice when swallowed can be soothing to the throat and help loosen thick mucous in the throat. **Note: Not to be given to children under 1 year of age.**

If it is determined based on history and examination that your cold is caused by a virus, antibiotics will do you no good. Depending on your specific set of symptoms you may be given medications to help with fever, pain, congestion, cough, or other symptoms. If antibiotics have been prescribed, it is mandatory that you take the complete course even if you feel better after several days.

If your doctor does not advise an antibiotic, consider this information:

1. People in our community have died as a result of drug-resistant bacteria.
2. In Hampton Roads, Virginia, bacterial resistance is 50% higher than national rates.
3. Overuse of antibiotics is the main reason bacterial resistance is so high.
4. For your health and safety, your doctor will not prescribe an antibiotic for any viral infections.
5. Unnecessary use of antibiotics doesn't help. It hurts. To find out more call 1-800 SENTARA or visit www.sentara.com/community.

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Viral Upper Respiratory Infection

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