

# AMG HealthWise

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## FAMILY PRACTICE

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## Top Three Ways To Avoid A Winter Bug

**E**ven if you're surrounded by an office full of Kleenex-blowing co-workers or stuck in a family-full of head colds, there is hope—you don't have to succumb to a winter bug. Here are three tips to help you avoid aches, pains and sniffles:

1. Get a flu shot. The best time to get a flu shot is before the flu season is in full swing. The month of November is the ideal time, but you can get one through January and still give yourself a flu-fighting advantage.

Flu shots are not recommended for pregnant women and for anyone with a severe egg allergy. Also, do not take a flu shot if you already have flu-like symptoms.

Flu symptoms usually come on quickly (usually within 12 hours) and include fever, headache and cough. By contrast, a cold will start with a sneezy, runny nose and scratchy throat.

2. Wash your hands. To avoid a common cold (also known as an "upper respiratory infection"), one of the wisest things you can do is to wash your hands frequently. Colds are spread when people sneeze and cough, depositing infected droplets on nearby surfaces.
3. Keep hands away from your nose. If you touch an infected surface and then put your finger in your nose, the cold virus will have direct access to your nasal passageways, where it will burrow in and do its thing.

*To avoid a common cold, one of the wisest things you can do is to wash your hands frequently.*



## Influenza (Flu)



**Definition** — A common, contagious respiratory infection caused by a virus. Incubation after exposure is 24 to 48 hours. There are three main types of influenza (A, B, C), but they have the ability to mutate into different forms. Outbreaks of different forms occur almost every winter with varying severity.



### Signs & Symptoms

- Chills and moderate to high fever.
- Muscle aches, including backache.
- Cough, usually with little or no sputum.
- Sore throat; hoarseness; runny nose; headache; fatigue.



**Fever** — A fever is an indication that your body is fighting a virus. Exercise may cause a virus to invade the heart muscle or pericardium, the sac around the heart. When your body temperature is above normal, fluids are diminished by five to 10 percent, thus increasing the risk of dehydration and subsequent complications connected to the original illness. Therefore, always drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. Also, do not attempt to cut back on food when you have a fever and don't exercise if your temperature is above 99.5 degrees. The presence of a fever requires more calories, not fewer.

**Causes** — Infection by viruses of the myxovirus class. The viruses spread by personal contact or indirect contact (such as use of a contaminated drinking glass).

### Risk Increases With

- Stress; excessive fatigue; poor nutrition.
- Students; people in semi-closed environments.
- Immunosuppression from drugs or illness.
- Recent illness that has lowered resistance.
- Chronic lung or heart disease.
- Crowded places during an epidemic.
- Pregnancy (3rd trimester).

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## How To Prevent

- Have a yearly influenza vaccine injection
- Avoid crowds during flu season.
- Avoid unnecessary contact with persons who have upper-respiratory infections.

**Probable Outcome** — Spontaneous recovery in 7 to 14 days if no complications occur. If complications arise, treatment with antibiotics is usually necessary and recovery may take 3 to 6 weeks.

## How To Treat

### General Measures —

- To relieve nasal congestion, use saltwater drops (1 teaspoon of salt to 1 quart of water).
- To relieve a sore throat, gargle often with warm or cold, double-strength tea.
- Use an ultrasonic cool-mist humidifier to increase air moisture. This thins lung secretions so they can be coughed up more easily. Don't put medicine in the humidifier; it does not help.
- To avoid spreading germs to others, wash your hands frequently.
- Use warm compresses or heating pad for aching muscles.
- Use a sponge bath to reduce a fever.
- See your doctor.

### Medication —

- For minor discomfort, you may use non-prescription drugs, such as acetaminophen, cough syrups, nasal sprays or decongestants.
- Don't give aspirin to a person younger than 18. Some research shows a link between the use of aspirin in children during a virus illness and the development of Reye's syndrome.

**Activity** — Rest is the best medicine and **rest aids recovery**.



*Always avoid exercise when you have a fever of 99.5 degrees F or above.*

## Is There A Remedy For A Viral 'COLD'?



The short answer to the question is: No, there is no cure for the common cold. Antibiotics, which with few exceptions work only against bacterial infections, will not cure or change the course of a common cold. Preventive immunizations are not available for most of the viruses except those causing influenza. Treatment is therefore limited to what we call symptomatic treatment; that is trying to make the symptoms of the disease better while our natural defenses fight the infection.

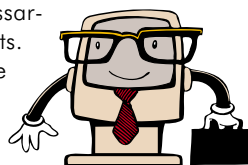
A typical cold will start in the nose, with sneezing and a runny nose. Scratchiness in the throat then develops, and it may go down to infect the larynx, causing laryngitis, or the bronchi in the chest, causing bronchitis. Fever may or may not occur, probably depending on which virus is causing the infection. It takes from five to seven days for the body's defenses to get up to speed and overcome the virus, but the congestion, mucus production and cough may last much longer. People with preexisting lung disease, asthma or emphysema may find those conditions made much worse during the cold, and they may require specific treatment. For most people, OTC drugs, pushing fluids, gargling, and rest are the only treatments needed.

Antibiotics should not be taken for uncomplicated viral illnesses, including colds. About 2 percent of people with a viral cold will develop bacterial ear or sinus infections, which will respond to antibiotics, but more people with plugged-up ears and congested sinuses need only a decongestant for relief. Almost all the cold viruses can lead to a pneumonia, with fever, cough-producing infected sputum, chest pains and other symptoms. This may be due to a bacterial infection on top of the virus, and antibiotics may be valuable.

Bill Lloyd, M.D. / [www.thriveonline.com](http://www.thriveonline.com)

## Consumer Smarts...

**On-line pharmacy prices** are not necessarily lower than those of traditional outlets. And on-line prescribing services can be dangerous if individuals use them to avoid seeing their own doctors for health problems. **Safest:** Have new prescriptions filled locally. Don't consider using an Internet pharmacy until you have taken a drug for several months. **Before ordering drugs on-line:** Compare prices, including delivery charges...check coverage with your health insurer...buy only from Web sites that have street addresses or telephone numbers...beware of foreign suppliers—drug quality may be lower and you need to continue under the care and supervision of your physician.



Harold Silverman, PharmD

## Insurance News...

January and February is a busy time of year for not only you but your doctor's office as well. The following are a few things that you need to keep in mind when seeing your physician for the first few months of the New Year.

Medicare patients have a \$100 deductible for office services that will need to be satisfied before any payment will be made by Medicare. If you know for certain that your secondary insurance pays for this deductible, you need to let us know when you are checking out at the front desk.

All patients with commercial insurance should know the amount of deductible they need to pay to satisfy their insurance company at the first of every year.

Tanya Johnston, Business Office

## READERS WANT TO KNOW...

**Q** What's the best way to curb diarrhea?

**A** Avoid solid foods and drink lots of clear liquids, such as water, broth, etc...but avoid very hot or very cold liquids. To make your own dehydration-fighting drink, mix four teaspoons of sugar and one of salt in one quart of water. As symptoms wane: Follow the BRAT regimen—eat bananas, rice, applesauce and toast. Then switch to small amounts of semisolid foods—potatoes, pasta and rice.

**Q** Can using my same toothbrush or tube of toothpaste re infect me after recovering from a cold?

**A** Contrary to popular belief, you *cannot* re infect yourself from a toothbrush you used when you had a cold or the flu... and certainly not from toothpaste squeezed from the same tube you used when you were sick.

**More surprising:** Sharing a toothbrush has never been demonstrated to transmit a disease from one person to another. However, preventive medicine experts say it is prudent for people suffering from blood-borne infections—such as HIV and hepatitis B and C—not share toothbrushes. Answer from William Schaffner, MD, chairman, department of preventive medicine.

**Q** Should vitamin tablets be taken on a full stomach or an empty one?

**A** A vitamin tablet taken on a full stomach dissolves more thoroughly and is absorbed more rapidly than one taken on an empty stomach. Supplements marked *time-release* have no extra value.



**Q** What's the best way to get rid of wax inside the ears?

**A** Most of the time, earwax dries up and falls out on its own. Using a swab to clear out wax can push it against the eardrum. That can interfere with hearing—or damage the eardrum. If earwax does accumulate, use a rubber bulb to flush your ears gently with warm water. If that doesn't work, see a doctor.

**Q** What can be done to curb medication side effects?

**A** Even minor side effects, such as flatulence or drowsiness, can make daily life very unpleasant. If a drug is causing trouble: Ask your doctor about trying a lower dosage. Dosages described in medical reference texts are often needlessly high. Rule of thumb: If a drug has been prescribed for a chronic condition like high cholesterol, a low dosage is usually okay. It can always be raised. Drugs for infections and other acute ailments generally must be taken at specific dosages.

## This American Century —US News

Fact	Year 1900	Year 2000
U.S. Population	75,994,575	273,482,000
Median Age	22.9	35.7
Biggest Source of Immigrants	Austria-Hungary	Mexico
Number of Millionaires	3,000	3.5 Million
Average Income	\$8,620 a year	\$23,812 a year
Deaths from Industrial Accidents	35,000 a year	6,100 a year
Average Work Week	60 hours	44 hours
Cigarettes Produced	4 billion	720 billion
Daily Newspapers	2,226	1,489
Dow Jones Industrial Average	68.13	11,000
Highway Fatalities	36 per 100 million miles	1.64 per 100 million miles
Miles of Paved Road	10	4 million
Cars Produced in U.S.	5,000	5.5 million
Adults Completing High School	15 percent	83 percent
Homes With Electricity	8 percent	99.9 percent
National Debt	\$24.8 billion	\$5 trillion
Voter Turnout	73.7 percent	48.9 percent
Average Size of Household	4.76 persons	2.62 persons
Beer Consumption	58.8 gallons per adult	31.6 gallons per adult
Life Expectancy For Men	46.3 years	73.6 years
Life Expectancy For Women	48.3 years	79.7 years
Deaths in Childbirth	9 per thousand	0.1 per thousand
Cancer Deaths	64 per 100,000	200 per 100,000
Divorced Men	0.3 percent	8.2 percent
Divorced Women	0.5 percent	10.3 percent

\*All money comparisons are in 1999 dollars / Estimate for 2000 or most recent statistic available



## Kids & Medicine

Always use over-the-counter medications formulated specifically for your child's age.

**Trap:** Infant medications are often those designed for older children.

**Example:** Acetaminophen liquid for infants often contains 400 mg of acetaminophen per 5 milliliters (ml), compared with 160 mg per 5 ml for children's acetaminophen liquid.

Parents who simply double the amount of an infant medication for an older child often wind up giving that child a dose that is too potent.

Michael A. McGuigan, MD, medical director, Ontario Regional Poison Information Centre, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada.

## CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS. . . CHANGE YOUR MOOD

Negative thoughts can increase stress and anxiety and put a damper on your self-esteem. Whenever you catch a negative thought floating through your mind, replace it with a positive, realistic statement. The idea is not to deny your feelings but to see your situation from another perspective. Here are some examples:

NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
"It's not good enough" "They aren't going to like it."	"I worked hard and I did my best." "It's good that I got it done."
"I feel fat and ugly today."	"I'm feeling upset. I wonder what's bothering me. I need to be extra gentle with myself today."
"Why is he mad at me?" "What did I do wrong?"	"It probably has nothing to do with me. If he's mad it's his concern, not mine."
"I can't believe I made that mistake. What a jerk I am."	"Mistakes happen. It's not the end of the world."
"I don't think I can do this."	"It's okay if it doesn't go just right. I'll try again, and I might learn something."
"My friend didn't call. She doesn't care about me."	"She hasn't called. She must be busy."

## Heart-Healthy Recipes



### Peppery Cheese Biscuits

Biscuits traditionally contain sizable amounts of fat to make them tender, but the good news is we've used less fat without compromising texture. This recipe trims calories futher by calling for nonfat buttermilk instead of whole milk.

- |                                    |                                         |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour       | 1/4 teaspoon salt                       |
| 2 tablespoons grated Romano cheese | 2/3 cup nonfat buttermilk               |
| 2 teaspoons baking powder          | 2 tablespoons vegetable oil             |
| 1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper     | Butter-flavored vegetable cooking spray |

1. Combine first 5 ingredients in a large bowl; stir well.
2. Combine buttermilk and oil; add to dry ingredients. Stir with a fork just until dry ingredients are moistened.
3. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface, and knead lightly 3 or 4 times. Roll dough to 1/2-inch thickness; cut into rounds with a 1 1/2-inch biscuit cutter.
4. Place biscuits on an ungreased baking sheet; lightly coat tops of biscuits with cooking spray. Bake at 400° for 15 mintues.

YIELD: 2 dozen biscuits; EXCHANGES PER BISCUIT: 1/2 Starch; PER BISCUIT: Calories 49, Carbohydrate 7.5g, Protein 1.4g, Fat 1.5g, Cholesterol 1mg, Fiber 0.3g, Sodium 40mg

Athens Medical Group would like to introduce you to the **AMG HealthWise** News-letter. This publication is to advise you, our patient, of the latest news and information within our office. You can find it each month in our lobbies and in our patient rooms.

### AMG HealthWise

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## Do You Remember?

*Remember how you love me then,  
You love me better now.*

*Remember how we dreamed and planned,  
We're doing it all now.*

*Remember how we were so young,  
We both have wrinkles now.*

*Remember when the kids were small,  
Grandchildren are here now.*

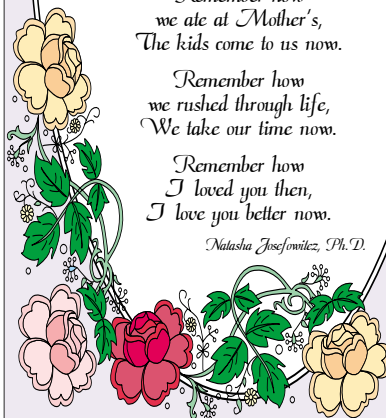
*Remember how we used to jog,  
We smell the flowers now.*

*Remember how we ate at Mother's,  
The kids come to us now.*

*Remember how we rushed through life,  
We take our time now.*

*Remember how I loved you then,  
I love you better now.*

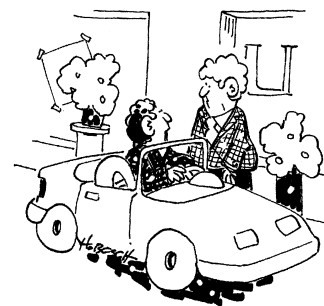
*Natasha Joscovitz, Ph.D.*



## Reflections



*Remember that your character is your destiny.*



"The bucket seats don't fit my bucket."