

The Common Cold

Introduction: What Is The Common Cold?

The common cold, also known as a head cold or simply a cold, is a disease of the respiratory system. It is caused by different groups of viruses and characterized by itching in the nose, regular sneezing, runny nose, and chills. These symptoms could be followed by an uncomfortable throat, tiredness, dizziness, mild headache, and thick mucus secretion (Eccles & Weber, 2009).



A Brief History of The Common Cold

The common cold is centuries old and its symptoms along with treatment are present in the oldest Egyptian medical literature (de Graaf, Osterhaus, Fouchier, & Holmes, 2008). Some studies also reported the presence of the common cold during the Stone Age (Dorfer et al., 1999). The name “cold” was used first in the 16th century due to the resemblance of its symptoms with the effects of cold weather on the human body. The most common cause of the common cold, i.e. Rhinovirus was first identified in 1956 by researchers from the United Kingdom (UK).

Research to find the treatment for the common cold has been going on since ancient times. Hippocrates, in 400 B.C., discovered that bleeding was slightly effective in the treatment of the common cold (although of course, it didn't really help). Later on, a Roman philosopher recommended that people “kiss the hairy muzzle of a mouse” in order to feel better. In 1970 and 1979, the miraculous effects of zinc and vitamin C were discovered for the relief of the common cold. However, medical research is still anxious about the prevention and treatment of the common cold (Atzl & Helms, 2009).

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14 days. The common cold is transmitted due to direct contact with the infected person or from the virus being present in the atmosphere (Dorfer et al., 1999).

Current Treatment of The Common Cold

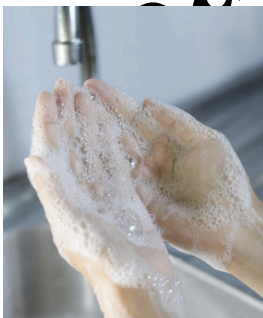
The common cold is caused by many different virus variations, which is why there is no universal treatment for it. Therefore, symptomatic treatment is provided to resolve the disturbing symptoms with the help of over the counter medications (Heikkinen & Järvinen, 2007).

Classes of drugs used during the symptomatic treatment of the common cold include; anti-allergic, nasal decongestants, cough suppressants, and mucus thinners. However, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recommended not to use these medications in children under 6 years of age due to the side effects of these medications (Eccles & Weber, 2009).

Among home remedies, humidified air and saline nasal drops may improve symptoms of nasal congestion and runny nose. For a cough, honey is helpful for children older than 12 months. Adequate intake of food and fluids should be maintained for further relief from the symptoms.

It is worth mentioning here that antibiotics are not effective in treating the common cold due to the viral nature of the disease. However, they may be required during the bacterial complications caused by the common cold. Further, the use of nasal sprays containing steroids (used to unblock stuffy nose) should be avoided in children (Diane E Pappas, 2015).

A number of alternate products such as zinc and vitamin C are also used to relieve the symptoms, but the use of these products is not encouraged due to the lack of evidence regarding their effectiveness.



Appropriate hygiene measures can help in the prevention of the common cold. Methods such as; thorough hand washing with soap, using alcohol-based hand rubs as well as the implementation of household cleaners to kill viruses can be used to prevent the spread of the common cold (Diane E Pappas, 2015).

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Reading Comprehension Questions:

1. What are the symptoms of the common cold?
2. Why was it called a cold?
3. What is the general name of the virus that causes the common cold?
4. Describe how a cold virus “takes hold” inside its host.
5. What is
6. How is the cold spread?
7. How
8. Why
9. What hygiene measure(s) can be used to prevent you from getting a cold?
10. Which population
11. Regarding your
12. Antibiotics are used too often to treat a cold even though they have absolutely no effect.
From your previous knowledge, why is the overuse of antibiotics a bad thing?
13. What will

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