

West @ 4722 W. Kellogg Dr.

316-440-2565 fax 316-440-2750

Northwest @ 3560 N. Maize Rd.

316-669-3851 fax 316-358-9832



East @ 5838 E. Central Ave.

316-440-4595 fax 316-440-4596

South @ 7030 S. Broadway St.

316-558-5950 fax 316-558-5951

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Cold and Flu, what you need to know.

SYMPTOMS: The symptoms of flu can include fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and fatigue (tiredness). Cold symptoms are usually milder than the symptoms of flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems.

TIPS:

The best way to **blow your nose** is covering one nostril and blowing gently. The pressure from blowing forcefully can not only lead to an earache, it might force mucus back into your sinuses.

To **shorten symptoms**, take an over the counter Vitamin C supplement like Emergen-C. Use as directed and take it as long as your symptoms persist. Zicam taken within 24 hours of your first symptom can also assist in lessening both severity and duration.

Regular exercise keeps your immune system strong, and can help you avoid coming down with the flu. It may even help shorten your down time once you're sick. **It's OK to exercise when you have a cold.** But if your symptoms include a fever, all-over body aches, or a headache, like a **flu you need bed rest** is important to help you get well.

If you take them early enough, **anti-viral medicines** can shorten your symptoms by a day or two. They may also help cut complications like pneumonia. That's especially important for people at higher risk of complications, like people who have heart or lung conditions, are over 65, or have a weakened immune system.

Decongestant sprays can work wonders for reducing nasal swelling and congestion, but their power can have a price. If you use them for more than 3 days in a row, you may get symptom rebound -- meaning worse nasal swelling when the medication wears off.

When to call a Doctor:

If you have a cold or the flu, your runny nose can produce yellow, white, or even greenish mucus. But call the doctor if these symptoms last more than a week, or if you have face or tooth pain for more than a week -- especially if it's on one side.

MEMBERS: As always, your provider is just a phone call or text message away. **It's better to be safe than sorry. Reach out if you are worried or if this protocol isn't helping.**

