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Wellness Works

Preparing For Cold & Flu Season

The average American will suffer through two to four colds this year. Millions more will endure at least one bout of the flu. Even though there is no cure, you can take action to reduce your chances of catching one of these nasty bugs. And if you do get sick, medical self-care practices can help you feel better quicker.

Is it a cold or the flu?

Both colds and the flu are caused by viruses. Both cause fatigue, cough, and nasal congestion. Other symptoms vary.

Cold

- Symptoms are restricted to nose, throat, air passages
- Usually no fever
- Feel better in couple of days

Flu

- Muscle aches; nose & throat irritation
- High fever and/or chills
- Symptoms last a week or more

PREVENTION

With colds and the flu, you are most contagious during the first 48 hours. **Stay home from work**, don't expose others, cover your mouth when you cough, and wash your hands often. Your fever should be gone without fever-reducing medicine.

Staying at home means that you should not leave your house except to get medical care. Stay away from others as much as possible.

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Medical self-care for a cold or the flu.

1. Drink fluids – both water and hot drinks or soup.
2. Humidify your environment – warm shower or breathe over a bowl of hot water.
3. Get plenty of rest.
4. Cough & blow – keep mucus moving.
5. Gargle – three times daily with warm salt water – ½ tsp. salt to a cup of water.
6. Don't take antibiotics.
7. May use an over-the-counter remedy such as Sudafed or Robitussin, but only as needed and directed.
8. Seek medical help if:
 - You have difficulty breathing, faintness, change in alertness, severe sore throat, cough producing a lot of sputum or mucus (especially if green or yellow), pain in the face, or a chronic health condition.
 - Symptoms have not resolved in 10 days.

Be actively involved to stay healthy during this cold & flu season, and use these medical self-care tips to save you time and money.

Get a flu shot

Your Best Protection Against the FLU - FREE for Regence BCBSO and Kaiser Permanente members.

- Regence members: Bring your medical ID card to a participating pharmacy including Fred Meyer/Kroger, Safeway, SuperValu/Albertsons, Rite Aid, Walgreens.
- Kaiser members: Find clinic locations for a flu shot at www.kp.org/flu

It's all about **TRUST.**

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Self-care tips

For easy-to-follow in-depth home care tips visit:

www.cisoregon.org/email_newsletters/PrepColdFluSeason.pdf