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for your health



Emergency

Two Most Common Ailments for Children in the Winter Season

Common Cold

A cold is an upper respiratory (chest/head) illness caused by a virus infection of airway passages. You know your child has a cold if they have a runny/stuffy nose, sneezing, watery eyes, sore throat, cough, aches, sweats, and/or a slight fever. Colds are contagious during the first 3-4 days but with Tylenol, plenty of clear fluids (such as water, fruit juice, tea, clear soups), and rest, a child recovers in few days or sometimes in up to a week or two. Antibiotics will not help recovery.

Gastroenteritis (Diarrhea and/or Vomiting)

Most diarrhea and/or vomiting in children is caused by a stomach gastro virus. A child suffering with Gastroenteritis may experience stomach cramping, high fever of 38-39°C, tiredness, and they typically do not want to eat. How can a parent help?

Day One

For infants — if your child is breastfed - continue to breastfeed even if the child is unwell or has diarrhea. Be sure your child drinks to replace lost fluids. Otherwise, give infants and children Pedialyte (or Lytren/Gastrolyte) purchased from a pharmacy. Older children can also be given Gatorade, diluted juice and clear soup/broth.

Day Two

After 24 hours of just fluids, the diarrhea and vomiting should decrease. If this is not the case, see your doctor. If symptoms are improving, slowly return your child to her normal diet of breastfeeding, formula (diluted ½ water, ½ formula) or easily digestible solid food (such as crackers, flour chapati/roti, rice cereal, mashed potatoes, plain meat/eggs, applesauce or bananas.

Day Three

If the diarrhea is almost gone, continue to return your child to her normal food.

"In the winter, Fraser Health hospital Emergency Room staff see a lot of cold and Gastroenteritis illnesses in young children," states, **Dr. Urbain Ip**, Medical Director, Surrey Memorial Hospital.

"Parents don't typically get too concerned over minor sniffles, but they need to know what to do if their child shows more serious signs of illness."

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Parents – Immediately take your child to the Doctor or Emergency if your child has

- ▶ Blood stained mucous or stools
- ▶ Unusual shortness of breath
- ▶ High fever that is not responding to Tylenol
- ▶ No decrease in the diarrhea after 24 hours of just fluids
- ▶ Vomiting as well as diarrhea (especially for infants under 2 years)
- ▶ Signs of dehydration ~no urine for 6-8 hours for infants under 1 year
- ▶ Started to appear more sick



Stay Healthy

- Get enough rest
- Wash your hands often
- Get the flu shot
- Take medicine correctly – re-fill prescriptions before the holidays
- Get informed about your family's health conditions
- Call 911 if you need urgent care
- Call the BC NurseLine at 1-866-215-4700 for health information



"In most cases a parent's supportive care at home helps a child recover from a common cold or Gastroenteritis," states **Dr. Denton Hirsh**, Pediatrician. "But, if you feel your child is getting sicker, don't hesitate to get help."

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