Dear parent or guardian:

Your child will likely get a cold several times a year. A cold is a mild infection of the upper respiratory system caused by a virus. Young children may get 5–6 colds a year. Children with colds typically don’t need to stay home from school unless they have a fever. If a child is too sick to take part in normal activities, they should stay home.

# Symptoms

A cold may last up to 2 weeks. Symptoms include:

* Runny or stuffy nose.
* Coughing.
* Sneezing.
* Sore throat.
* Mild fever.
* Swollen glands.
* Stuffy ears.
* Clear, yellow, or green mucous.
* Mild aches and pain.
* Mild fever.

# Spread

Coughing or sneezing spreads cold viruses through the air. Cold viruses can also spread on hands and surfaces.

# Diagnosis and treatment

There is no cure for the common cold. Antibiotics are not effective against colds. Get enough rest and drink plenty of fluids to ease symptoms.

# Prevention

Good hygiene is the best way to prevent spreading colds:

* Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water. Antibacterial soap is not necessary.
* Teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with their elbow or a tissue.
* Throw tissues away after each use.
* Wash your hands after using a tissue.
* Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

# Learn more

For more info, contact a healthcare provider.