



## **TAKE CARE OF YOUR COLD**

### **A SELF-CARE GUIDE FROM EASTERN'S STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE**

A cold makes you feel lousy, no question about it, and we're sorry we can't help you make it go away immediately, but here are some suggestions to help you feel better. Also, don't forget to cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, and wash your hands a lot to reduce the risk of infecting others.

#### **What you can do to help yourself:**

- Get plenty of sleep. Your body needs rest to get better.
- Increase your fluid intake to replace the fluids lost through fever, coughing and sneezing.
- Take a steamy shower to help loosen your respiratory secretions. If you can blow or cough them out, you'll feel better.
- Put a pinch of salt in a small glass of warm water and gargle frequently to relieve pain in your throat.
- Drink warm fluids (like chicken soup or herbal tea with honey) to relieve sore throat and keep it from feeling dry. You can also try cold things like popsicles for your sore throat.
- Stay in! This is no time to go out and party, or do anything else for that matter.

#### **Things you can take for temporary relief:**

- **Anesthetic lozenges** (Cepacol) and sprays (Chloraseptic) numb a sore throat.
- **Acetaminophen** 325mg ("Non-Aspirin"; e.g., Tylenol) relieves pain and reduces fever. *Take 2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed. Do not exceed 12 tablets in 24 hours. Be careful not to use with other acetaminophen-containing products; acetaminophen is hazardous in higher than recommended doses)*
- **Ibuprofen** (Motrin, Advil) 200mg also relieves pain and reduces fever. Do not use with other similar products such as Aleve/Naprosyn. *Normally, take 2 tablets every 4 hours. For severe pain or discomfort, you can take 3 tablets every 6 hours. Do not exceed 4 tablets every 8 hours. Take with food.*
- **Decongestants like pseudoephedrine** 30mg (Sudafed, generic) are in many cold tablets but now only available behind the pharmacy counter. These medications help shrink swollen membranes, decrease mucous secretions, and reduce nasal congestion. *Take 1 or 2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed. Do not use with other nasal decongestant tablets (anything with pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine). Long-acting (12 hour) decongestants may be available as well.*
- **Nasal saline spray** moistens nasal secretions and helps your sinuses drain. Use freely.
- **Nasal decongestant spray** (Afrin or store generic brands) help to dry up a runny or stuffy nose. *Use 2 sprays in each nostril every 12 hours as needed. DO NOT USE FOR MORE THAN THREE CONSECUTIVE DAYS.*
- **Combination products** containing multiple ingredients such as acetaminophen, chlorpheniramine, dextromethorphan, phenylephrine, etc.) try to do everything at once, including treating cough, nasal congestion, pain, and fever. These medications are not the best choice but if you use them, *follow package directions for specific dosing, and do not use with other medications containing the same ingredients. Also, do not use them if you are treating just one symptom.*
- **Expectorant/suppressant cough syrup** (Robitussin DM; contains guaifenesin 100mg, dextromethorphan 10mg) promotes a less frequent, more productive cough. *Take 2 teaspoonfuls every 4 hours as needed for cough. Do not use with other dextromethorphan containing medications unless otherwise advised.*

**Antibiotics are not effective in curing a viral respiratory infection such as a cold or bronchitis. A typical infection will last 10-14 days. If your symptoms last longer than this, or if you have a fever (~100°) for more than 2-3 days, or if you are having trouble breathing, please make an appointment to see us. To schedule an appointment, or if you have questions, call 860-465-5263.**