

Rhinovirus, The common cold , another reason to wash hands

Children's Health Education The Singing Nurse Music



The following info is compiled from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), WebMD, KidsHealth and the nanobugs website. I hope you will be encouraged, educated and awed as I was by the more recent discoveries of the Rhinovirus (rhino means “nose”). Please share this information.

Interesting observances

The average child will catch a cold 8-10 times by the age of 2 and more so if they hang around with other kids. Chances just increase by association for children and adults who care for them. Most of us catch 3 to 4 colds a year.

The number one reason for visits to the pediatrician and missing school is the common cold.

Experts say autumn and spring are common times of year to catch colds, while others say winter is the prime time because we are inside and the viruses stay inside as well.

The time it takes to become ill from the time you were exposed (incubation period) to a rhinovirus, is about 2 to 3 days.

The researchers used to believe we had about 100 different rhinoviruses to contend with, but more recently cold expert Owen Hendley, MD, a professor of medicine at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville says “It’s beginning to look as if there may be as many as 200”. This is another reason colds are common.

Research has also shown that along with coughs and sneezes that send the virus droplets into the air, we are more likely to get the virus from things and surfaces. Think: phone, doorknob, remote control, shopping cart, desk and toys. The virus can live up to 24 hours or more on a surface.

Droplets from coughs and sneezes can spread to a distance of 12 feet.

The entry points for the virus are the nose, eyes and mouth, less so by mouth as once thought, for Dr. Hendley says, “Substances in saliva quickly destroy the virus.”

Washing our hands is still the best practice; alcohol rinses are good for flu viruses but not as effective against the rhinovirus. Good old H₂O, soap and friction is best for preventing the spread of the cold virus.

Carnegie Mellon University researchers discovered those who were more rested (8 or more hrs of sleep) had less chances of catching a cold, while those with less than 7 hrs sleep were 3 times more likely to become ill from exposure to the rhinovirus.

The same research team discovered people who were happy, lively and calm fought off cold and flu viruses better than those who were anxious, hostile and depressed. I guess the proverb is still true, “a merry heart does good like a medicine”.

Being in a dry environment, being a smoker or being around a smoker increases our chances of catching colds and also resulting in more complications like bronchitis and pneumonia.

Signs and Symptoms in multiple combinations:

Runny nose, cough, sneezing, headache, sore throat, mild fever, fatigue, and muscle aches or loss of appetite are the most common signs of a cold.

Things to Remember:

Cover your cough or sneeze, do it into your elbow, shoulder or tissue.

If you cough or sneeze into your hands, or blow your nose, wash your hands.

Don't share items with others: towels, toothbrushes, drinks, fork, spoon etc.

When in doubt as to which medicines or products can be used on children, always consult your pediatrician. Try and get your pediatricians advice about caring for a child with a cold before they get one.

Drink plenty of fluids, do not drink caffeinated drinks as they cause frequent urination and may cause dehydration especially in children.

If you observe any severe symptoms of: coughing, breathing difficulty, turning blue, high fevers, severe pain of any kind, the safest practice is to; “when in doubt, check it out,” with your health care professional of course or call 911.

Be an example by washing hands as mentioned, covering your cough and sneezes to be kind to your neighbor. And remember, to not put your hands in your nose, eyes or mouth without washing them first.

Have a ongoing matter of fact conversation with your children throughout your day like; “oops, I coughed in my hands, I'm going to go and wash these germs down the drain” or ” wow, so glad I sneezed in my shoulder (right after you have done it) because I don't want you to get my germs.” Or “I'm going to wash my hands because we just went shopping and we are touching things that lots of people touched, they could be sick and this will help keep us healthy.”

Make hand washing fun, kids love to play in water, make it a teachable moment, make up a song about washing those germs down the drain or sing a song you know about hand washing.

The Singing Nurse uses [“Rubba Dub Dub”](#) and [“Don't Spread Your Germs Around”](#) to teach families about hand washing, not spreading germs and health living.

Other resources: [Hand Washing Lesson Plan and Animated Handwashing Song](#), [Music](#)

For Healthy Families, Ms. Dawn, The Singing Nurse

