



Kapa'a Pediatrics, LLC

## Upper Respiratory Tract Infection

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI), also known as the common cold, is usually caused by a virus. There are more than 200 different type of viruses that can cause a cold. Kids who attend daycare or school can get 6-12 colds a year.

**What to Expect:** After the virus invades your body, the immune system starts to react to the virus. This, in turn, causes the usual symptoms of colds: fever, runny nose, congestion, sore throat, cough. It is most important for parents to understand the usual pattern of a cold so they can notify their child's pediatrician if the viral URI does not follow the usual course.

In general:

- **Fevers (100.4-105F) should start in the first 1-2 days of illness and generally not last longer than 72 hours. Any fever higher than 105F or with a pattern outside this guideline should prompt a call to your pediatrician.**
- Cough usually starts within the first 1-3 days of illness, gets worse through days 3-6, then progressively gets better through 14 days.
- Runny nose usually starts within the first 1-3 days and can last for 7-10 days. Yellow or green colored mucous by itself does NOT mean that your child needs antibiotics.
- Sore throat usually starts and lasts for the first 3 days of illness. Remember, strep throat does NOT cause runny nose and cough.

**Treatment:** There is no effective common cold medicine that has been specifically tested on children. Serious, even deadly, side effects have been reported in children who have used over-the-counter (OTC) cold medications. Kapa'a Pediatrics does NOT recommend any over-the-counter medication to treat your child's cold. We understand, that despite this recommendation, parents will still use OTC medications to try and help alleviate uncomfortable symptoms. We provided a handout "Medications- Over-the-Counter," to help parents navigate some of the common active ingredients.

Remember not to give your child 2 different medications with the same active ingredients.

### When should I call my doctor?

- Age- Any infant less than 6 months of age - please call us to discuss illness history in detail
- Fever that lasts longer than 3 days (72 hours) or cough that lasts longer than 2 weeks
- Fever that STARTS for the first time after the third day of illness
- Fever over 105 F
- Neck pain, neck stiffness, wheezing, difficulty breathing, or shortness of breath

**When can my child go back to school?** This is a difficult question to answer since all viral colds have their own specific infectious life-cycle. In general, if your child has a fever they are very infectious. Most children are less infectious after 7 days, but many viruses can continue to be spread for 2-3 weeks.

\*\*\* Patient handouts created by Kapa'a Pediatrics are intended to give parents the most common and pertinent facts about a certain issue. If there is ever any concern that your child was given an incorrect diagnosis or is not following the usual expected course for an illness please call us to speak with a physician. (808) 634-8011\*\*\*