

Facts about colds

Colds are infections caused by viruses that affect the upper respiratory tract. Common symptoms include nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, fatigue, and cough. Fever can occur but is more common in children than in adults. ¹

How prevalent are colds?

Colds are extremely widespread. Most adults experience 2-3 episodes per year, while children typically have 6-10 annually. Among preschoolers, the frequency can be even higher. Colds are the leading cause of school or work absences and a frequent reason for healthcare visits. ²

How do colds spread?

When someone with a cold coughs or sneezes, small droplets containing the virus are formed and spread through the air. Colds spread through close physical contact, such as shaking hands with an infected person and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. It can also spread indirectly via surfaces like door handles, railings, and bus poles. Viruses on surfaces can survive for several hours. ¹

What causes a cold?

Rhinoviruses are the most common cause of colds. After recovering from a cold, you have some immunity against the same virus type. However, because there are many variants of cold viruses, the risk of encountering a new type of cold virus is high. ¹

Secondary illnesses

Resistance to new infections temporarily decreases during a cold. Secondary illnesses following a cold can include sinusitis, bronchitis, pneumonia, and ear infections. ¹

Jackson Score

A commonly used method for assessing the severity of cold symptoms.

The eight symptoms evaluated are:

- Nasal congestion
- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Chills
- General malaise
- Headache

Each symptom is rated on a 4-point scale from 0–3:

- 0 = Absent
- 1 = Mild
- 2 = Moderate
- 3 = Severe

Ref: 1.1177.se, accessed on 17th December 2024

2. Internetmedicin.se, accessed on 17th December 2024