

# Frequent Infections in Children: Care Instructions

## Overview

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Infections such as colds and the flu are common in children. These infections are caused by germs called viruses.

Children can easily spread these germs when they are in close contact, such as at day care, school, and home. Your child can get germs from coughs or sneezes or by touching something that another person has coughed or sneezed on. And children have not yet built up immunity to these germs, so they get sick often.

Most colds go away on their own and don't lead to other problems. With most viral infections, your child should feel better within 4 to 10 days. Home treatment can help relieve your child's symptoms. Make sure your child rests and drinks plenty of fluids.

Most children have 8 to 10 colds in the first 2 years of life. There are ways you can help reduce your child's risk for getting sick, such as limiting your child's exposure to germs and practicing good hand-washing.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

## How can you care for your child at home?

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- Wash your hands and have your child wash their hands often to avoid spreading germs.
- If your child goes to a day care center, ask the staff to wash their hands often to prevent the spread of germs.
- If one child is sick, separate that child from other children in the home, if you can. Put the child in a room alone when it is time to sleep.
- Keep your child home from school, day care, or other public places while your child has a fever.
- Don't let your child share personal items like utensils, drinking cups, and towels with others.
- Remind your child to keep their hands away from the nose, eyes, and mouth. Viruses are most likely to enter the body through these areas.
- Teach your child to cough and sneeze away from others and to use a tissue when coughing and wiping their nose.
- Make sure that your child gets all of their vaccinations, including COVID-19 and flu vaccines.
- Keep your child away from smoke. Do not smoke or let anyone else smoke in your house.
- Encourage your child to be active each day. Your child may like to take a walk with you, ride a bike, or play sports.
- Make sure that your child eats a healthy and balanced diet.

## When should you call for help?

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Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your child is not getting better as expected.
- Your child is not growing or developing as expected.

## Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/PatientEd>

Enter **R763** in the search box to learn more about "**Frequent Infections in Children: Care Instructions**".

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