

The Common Cold **AHCHOO!**

Some **lighthearted** facts and figures about the **common cold**, how to avoid it and what to do if you've caught one, all courtesy of **Adams**, makers of best-selling medicated sweet brands **Halls Mentho-Lyptus** and **Halls Soothers**.

How Awfully Common

The common cold is a viral infection of the upper respiratory system, which includes the nose, throat, sinuses, eustachian tube, trachea, larynx and bronchial tubes. The average adult suffers from 2-5 colds a year, pre-school children up to 8. As we get older, our immunity builds up, so we get fewer colds.

A Day Off Work

Colds are the most common illness and the average person is likely to have more than 50 during a lifetime. They are also the leading cause of visits to the doctor and for time off school and work. In the UK, more than 100 million workdays are lost through absenteeism caused by colds.

Avoid Stress

Although it's not true that getting wet or chilled causes a cold, you are more likely to be susceptible if you are tired and overworked, suffering from emotional stress, living or working in crowded conditions or if you are a smoker.

Travelling In Style

This is the golden age of the cold, with densely populated cities proving breeding grounds for viruses and infection, while modern transport systems like jumbo jets carry viruses from country to country.



Common Cold Virus

Although there are over 200 cold viruses, most are caused by rhinoviruses or nose viruses, which are so minute that 50,000 of them could fit end to end across a single millimetre.

How The Virus Infects

These viruses enter the nose in a tiny blob expelled from an infected person, lodge on shelf-like structures called turbinates, then are transported to the back of the throat to the adenoid, which contains cells to which the viruses attach themselves.

What Are The Symptoms?

Symptoms usually start two days after infection, the first signs being a dry scratchy sore throat, as the virus first infects the back of the nose. This is followed by a runny nose, sneezing and coughing, then a blocked nose as large veins lining the nasal passages begin to swell.

Cold Or Flu?

It's difficult to tell the difference between colds and flu, because while fever and muscle aches and pains are symptoms of influenza, they can also occur with a severe cold. Although flu does tend to last longer, typically over 2 weeks compared to around 7 days for a cold.

Wash Your Hands

Particles are expelled by coughs and sneezes, settling on nearby surfaces like doorknobs and handrails, and most cold viruses are transferred from the fingertips by touching your nose or rubbing your eyes. So wash your hands frequently, avoid shaking hands with someone who has a cold and don't share things like pencils, telephones or mugs.

Can Antibiotics Help?

Antibiotics stop the growth of bacteria, but have no effect on cold viruses and may also kill helpful bacteria. Despite this, 1 in 4 of us are likely to demand antibiotics for colds and flu, although GP's are now advised not to prescribe them.

Self-Medication Best

Doctors recently launched a campaign to persuade people that cold and flu symptoms can be best treated at home. Their advice is to drink plenty of liquids and take over the counter (OTC) remedies. In the UK, the total market for OTC cough and cold remedies is worth more than £550 million.



