

EL PASO HEALTH

General Principles for the Diagnosis and Management of Viral Upper Respiratory Infections

The following guideline recommends general principles and key clinical activities for the diagnosis and management of *Acute Nasopharyngitis, Acute Laryngopharyngitis and Acute upper respiratory Infection*

Eligible Population	Key Components	Recommendations
Children 3-18 years old with upper respiratory infections	Diagnosis	A viral upper respiratory infection is a self-limited illness typically lasting up to 14 days manifested by rhinorrhea, cough, fever, headache, sore throat, hoarseness, mild fussiness or irritability, decrease in appetite, sleep disturbance and mild eye redness or drainage.
	Education and Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand washing/hand sanitizers • Drink more fluids • Get plenty of rest • Use a cool-mist vaporizer or saline nasal spray to relieve congestion
	Medication	<p>Reduce unnecessary use of antibiotics. Antibiotic treatment should be reserved for a bacterial illness. Because colds are viral infections, antibiotic use will not cure or shorten their length. Management of the common cold, nonspecific URI, and acute cough illness should focus on symptomatic relief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasal decongestants • Cough Suppressants • Expectorants • Antihistamines • Pain Relievers/Fever Reducers <p>Clinicians should be certain that caregivers understand both the importance of administering these medications only as directed and the risk of overdose if they administer additional medications that might contain the same ingredient. The Food and Drug Administration does not have approved dosing recommendations for clinicians prescribing cough and cold medications for children two and under.</p>
	Re-evaluation	<p>This guideline applies to patients in normal health and without severe complicating health factors.</p> <p>Re-evaluation if: 1) fever lasts for three days or more 2) symptoms worsen after 3 to 5 days or if new symptoms appear (increasing symptoms of illness, lethargy, decreased responsiveness, poor eye contact, difficulty breathing) 3) symptoms have not improved after 7 to 10 days; it is not unusual for a mild cough and congestion to continue 14 days or more.</p> <p>This guideline is designed to assist clinicians by providing an analytical framework for the evaluation and treatment of patients, and is not intended either to replace a clinician's judgment or to establish a protocol for all patients with a particular condition.</p>

This guideline is based on the National Guideline Clearinghouse Guidelines summary: Diagnosis and treatment of respiratory illness in children and adults: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; 1994 June (Revised 2013 January) <https://www.guideline.gov>. and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Know when Antibiotics work in Doctor's Offices. <https://www.cdc.gov>.

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