

Social Media Toolkit

Title: The Common Cold and how to avoid one

For use during week 48 (December 2-December 8, 2019)

Launch Date: November 18, 2019

Introduction

**Describe content of toolkit.*

**Describe background of topic*

**Describe the source(s) for the toolkit content*

This toolkit contains Instagram and Facebook posts, Tweets, and hashtags related to the common cold, how to avoid getting a cold, and telling the difference between the flu and a cold.

More than 200 virus types can cause a cold, but the most common one is the rhinovirus, which is thought to be responsible for at least 50% of colds. Other viruses that can cause colds include coronavirus, respiratory syncytial virus, influenza and parainfluenza.⁴ It is called the “common cold” for a good reason--there are over *one billion* colds in the United States each year. Colds are the most common reason that children miss school and parents miss work. Parents often get colds from their children. Children can get many colds every year. They usually get them from other children. A cold can spread quickly through schools or daycares. Colds can occur at any time of the year, but they are most common in the winter or rainy seasons.¹

Cold symptoms usually start about 2 or 3 days after you came in contact with the virus, although it could take up to a week and symptoms mostly affect the nose.¹ Symptoms usually include sore throat, runny nose, coughing, sneezing, headaches, and body aches. Most people recover within about 7-10 days. However, people with weakened immune systems, asthma, or conditions that affect the lungs and breathing passages may develop serious illness, such as pneumonia. Common colds are the main reason that children miss school and adults miss work. Each year in the United States, millions of people get the common cold. Adults have an average of 2-3 colds per year, and children have even more.²

You can catch a cold if

- A person with a cold sneezes, coughs, or blows their nose near you; or
- You touch your nose, eyes, or mouth after you have touched something contaminated by the virus.

Treatments:¹

- Get plenty of rest and drink fluids.
- Over-the-counter (OTC) cold and cough medicines may help ease symptoms in adults and older children. They do not make your cold go away faster, but can help you feel better. These OTC medicines are not recommended for children under age 4.
- Antibiotics should not be used to treat a common cold.
- Many alternative treatments have been tried for colds, such as vitamin C, zinc supplements, and echinacea. Talk to your health care provider before trying any herbs or supplements.

Possible Complications¹

Colds are the most common trigger of wheezing in children with asthma. A cold may also lead to: a) [Bronchitis](#); b) [Ear infection](#); c) [Pneumonia](#) or d) [Sinusitis](#)

Prevention¹

To lower your chances of getting sick, do the following:

- Always wash your hands. Children and adults should wash hands after nose-wiping, diapering, and using the bathroom, and before eating and preparing food.
- Disinfect your environment. Clean commonly touched surfaces (such as sink handles, door knobs, and sleeping mats) with an EPA-approved disinfectant.
- Choose smaller daycare classes for your children.
- Use instant hand sanitizers to stop the spread of germs.
- Use paper towels instead of sharing cloth towels.

The immune system helps your body fight off infection. Here are ways to support the immune system:

- Avoid secondhand smoke. It is responsible for many health problems, including colds.
- DO NOT use antibiotics if they are not needed.
- Breastfeed infants if possible. Breast milk is known to protect against respiratory tract infections in children, even years after you stop breastfeeding.
- Drink plenty of fluids to help your immune system work properly.
- Eat yogurt that contains "active cultures." These may help prevent colds. Probiotics may help prevent colds in children.
- Get enough sleep.

Target audience/high-risk subsets

**Describe target audience*

Everyone

**Describe high-risk or sub-populations, if appropriate*

These factors can increase your chances of getting a cold³:

- **Age.** Children younger than 6 are at greatest risk of colds, especially if they spend time in child-care settings.
- **Weakened immune system.** Having a chronic illness or otherwise weakened immune system increases your risk.
- **Time of year.** Both children and adults are more susceptible to colds in fall and winter, but you can get a cold anytime.
- **Smoking.** You're more likely to catch a cold and to have more-severe colds if you're exposed to cigarette smoke.
- **Exposure.** If you're around many people, such as at school or on an airplane, you're likely to be exposed to viruses that cause colds.

Target Audience Needs/Issues/Considerations

**Include considerations that the opposition may provide*

None

Supporting Campaigns

**Include organizations that would have credible information and would be likely to have their own campaigns*

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[HealthyChildren.org](#)

[Mayo Clinic](#)

[National Institutes of Health \(Medline Plus\)](#)

References

¹National Institutes of Health (MedlinePlus). (2019, November 6). Common cold. Retrieved on 11/14/19 from: <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000678.htm>

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019, March 18). Common Cold. Retrieved on 11/14/19 from: <https://www.cdc.gov/dotw/common-cold/index.html#:~:targetText=Prevention%20Tips&targetText=Viruses%20that%20cause%20colds%20can%20stay%20o>
[n%20your%20hands%2C%20and,from%20people%20who%20are%20sick.](https://www.cdc.gov/dotw/common-cold/index.html#:~:targetText=Prevention%20Tips&targetText=Viruses%20that%20cause%20colds%20can%20stay%20o)

³Mayo Clinic. [Internet]. Common cold. Retrieved on 11/14/19 from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/common-cold/symptoms-causes/syc-20351605>

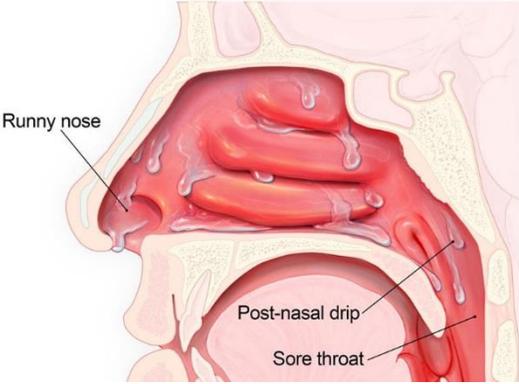
⁴ WebMD. [Internet]. Understanding the common cold—the basics. Retrieved on 11/17/19 from: <https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/cold-guide/understanding-common-cold-basics#1>

Toolkit Content

Please list: Developer(s) Affiliation(s) Title(s)	Sandra Vasenda NEOMED MPH Student																									
Estimated time used to create	10 hours																									
Date submitted	November 14, 2019																									
DUE date & TARGET date for release (Monday)	Due date: November 1, 2019 Target date for release: Monday, November 18, 2019																									
Approvals (Needs at least one reviewer per column—initial appropriate column)	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Reviewer</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Date</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Format & language (grammar)</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Social media content</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Public health content</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Amy Lee</td> <td>11/14/19</td> <td>AL</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Osman Ulvi</td> <td>11/16/19</td> <td>OU</td> <td>OU</td> <td>OU</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Reviewer	Date	Format & language (grammar)	Social media content	Public health content	Amy Lee	11/14/19	AL			Osman Ulvi	11/16/19	OU	OU	OU										
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<p>Approvers Instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please approve by the target date for release. Approvers may review for more than one review category (e.g. both public health content and social media content). At least one approver is needed per category; two approvers are preferred. • Feel free to add or make edits—there will not be an opportunity for the original student group to make further edits 																										
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Accuracy	Sources of all data are provided (all credible sources) YES or NO																									
Social Media Platforms Included	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;">Platform</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Ideal number</th> <th style="width: 25%;">In this toolkit</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Facebook</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Twitter</td> <td>10</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Instagram</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hashtags (for Twitter or Instagram)</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Video (YouTube)</td> <td>Optional</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Print media (e.g. press release)</td> <td>Optional</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (list): Photos Blog post ideas</td> <td>Optional</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Platform	Ideal number	In this toolkit	Facebook	5	5	Twitter	10	12	Instagram	5	5	Hashtags (for Twitter or Instagram)	10	10	Video (YouTube)	Optional	2	Print media (e.g. press release)	Optional		Other (list): Photos Blog post ideas	Optional		
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FACEBOOK

Facebook 1		<p>How to Feel Better To feel better, you should get lots of rest and drink plenty of fluids. Over-the-counter medicines may help ease symptoms but will not make your cold go away any faster. Always read the label and use medications as directed. Talk to your doctor before giving your child non-prescription cold medicines, since some cold medicines contain ingredients that are not recommended for children. Source: (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) Accessed 11/14/19 https://www.cdc.gov/dotw/common-cold/index.html#</p>
Facebook 2		<p>Protect Yourself and Others Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Viruses that cause colds can survive on your hands and regular handwashing can help you from getting sick. Source: (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) Accessed 11/14/19 https://www.cdc.gov/dotw/common-cold/index.html#</p>
Facebook 3		<p>When to see a Doctor You should call a doctor if you or your child has one or more of these conditions: a temperature higher than 100.7°F; symptoms that last more than 10 days or symptoms that are severe or unusual. If your child is younger than three months of age and has a fever, you should always call your doctor right away. Your doctor can determine if you or your child has a cold and can recommend therapy to help with symptoms. Source: (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) Accessed 11/14/19 https://www.cdc.gov/dotw/common-cold/index.html#</p>

Facebook 4	<p style="text-align: center;">Headache</p> 	<p>Get Smart When you have a cold, mucus fills your nose, causing runny nose, congestion and mucus to drip down your throat (post-nasal drip) which can cause a sore throat and cough. The mucus helps wash the germs from the nose and sinuses. After 2-3 days, mucus may change to a white, yellow, or green color. This does not necessarily mean antibiotics are needed. Source: (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) Accessed 11/14/19 https://www.cdc.gov/dotw/common-cold/index.html#</p>
Facebook 5		

	Infographic	Website	Caption (if provided)	When accessed	Permission
Facebook 1		https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/cold-vs-flu	Do you know the difference between the common cold and influenza?	11/14/19	Source: Northwestern Medicine
Facebook 2					
Facebook 3					
Facebook 4					
Facebook 5					

TWEETS

Twitter best practices

- *Keep it short and simple--although messages can be <280 characters now, keep them short anyway!*
- *Post often--it is recommended to post 3 tweets per day, with different framing to reach diverse populations*
- *Post other relevant content from partners or followers*
- *Use relevant hashtags (maximum of 2 hashtags)*

Tweet 1	Although many types of viruses can cause a common cold, rhinoviruses are the most common culprit. A cold virus enters your body through your mouth, eyes or nose. The virus can spread through droplets in the air when someone who is sick coughs, sneezes or talks.
Tweet 2	Children younger than 6 are at greatest risk of colds, especially if they spend time in child-care settings.
Tweet 3	A common cold occurs one to three days after exposure to a cold-causing virus. Signs and symptoms might include runny or stuffy nose; sore throat; cough; congestion; slight body aches or a mild headache; sneezing; low-grade fever; and generally feeling unwell.
Tweet 4	People are most contagious for the first 2 to 3 days of a cold. A cold is most often not contagious after the first week.
Tweet 5	Sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, sneezing, runny nose, fever, chills, and muscle aches are all symptoms associated with the common cold.
Tweet 6	Over-the-counter medicines for a cold may make you feel better but do not lessen the number of days. As always, drinking plenty of fluids and rest are most important!
Tweet 7	Viruses that cause colds can stay on your hands, and regular handwashing can help protect you from getting sick. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Stay away from people who are sick.
Tweet 8	If your child has a bacterial infection, antibiotics may help. But if your child has a virus, antibiotics will not help your child feel better or keep others from getting sick. The common cold and flu are both viruses.
Tweet 9	Most children have about 8 to 10 colds during the first 2 years of life. If a child spends time in child care settings where he or she is near other children with colds, the child may catch even more colds .
Tweet 10	Flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. It can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone and may require special testing.
Tweet 11	Learn some of the differences between cold and flu: https://go.usa.gov/xVn4Sexternal icon
Tweet 12	Antibiotics do not work against viruses that cause colds and will not help you feel better.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram best practices

- Post 3-4 times during the week
- Use varying content (not only picture sharing but include videos and graphics)
- Use relevant hashtags so people can find your content

Instagram 1

healthdirect
Cold or flu?

Know the difference

- Colds** are very common. They are caused by about 200 different viruses. There is no vaccine for a cold.
- The flu** is a viral infection affecting your nose, throat and sometimes your lungs. A vaccine is available for the flu.
- Good hygiene reduces the spread of colds and flu, especially after coughing and sneezing.

Understand the symptoms

Body aches/pain Slight Usual, often severe	Fever Rare Usual, lasts 3 to 4 days
Sore throat Common Sometimes	Chest discomfort/cough Mild to moderate, hacking cough Common, can become severe
Headache Rare Common	Fatigue/weakness Sometimes Usual, can last up to 2 to 3 weeks
Sneezing Usual Sometimes	Extreme exhaustion Never Usual, at the beginning of the illness

Still not sure if it's a cold or flu? healthdirect's Symptom Checker can help you decide what to do next
www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker

Colds and flu treatments

- Get lots of rest
- Drink plenty of water
- Keep warm
- Avoid cigarette smoke
- Try steam inhalation
- Try ice or honey and lemon for a sore throat
- Paracetamol or Ibuprofen for fever, aches and pains
- Saline nasal sprays or decongestants for a blocked or runny nose
- Take throat lozenges for a sore throat

Do not use cough medicines for children younger than six years old.

Myths vs reality

Top colds and flu myths debunked

Myth: The flu is not a serious illness. Fact: The flu is a highly contagious and potentially life-threatening disease.	Myth: Colds and the flu can be treated with antibiotics. Fact: Antibiotics won't cure a cold or flu. Antibiotics only work against bacteria not viral infections.
Myth: Vitamin C supplements can prevent the flu or colds. Fact: There is no evidence to support vitamin C supplements as a way of preventing colds or flu.	Myth: Healthy people don't need to be vaccinated. Fact: Everyone can benefit from the flu vaccine. If you are at higher risk group, the vaccine is free.
Myth: You can catch a cold or the flu from cold weather or getting caught in the rain. Fact: The flu or colds are caused by viruses and not by cold climates or being exposed to cold air.	Myth: I'm pregnant, so I shouldn't have the flu jab because it will affect my baby. Fact: The flu shot is safe for pregnant women at all stages of their pregnancy.

At high risk of becoming seriously ill from flu?
Talk to your doctor or pharmacist

- Elderly**
- Pregnant women**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**
- Existing serious medical conditions**

Why
Annual vaccination is the best way of preventing the flu and any associated illness.

Cost
The flu vaccine is available FREE under the National Immunisation Program for people at high risk.

Where
Vaccine is available from doctors, pharmacists and other vaccination providers.

© 2016 Healthdirect Australia Ltd

Cold or Flu?

Accessed 11/14/19

Source: Health Direct

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cold-or-flu-infographic>

Know the Difference

Cold and flu are very similar illnesses, but the flu is more severe and can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia. This guide can help you identify the signs and symptoms of each.

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU
 Cough	✓	✓
 Fatigue/ Weakness		✓
 Headache		✓
 High Fever ($>101^{\circ}\text{F}$)		✓
 Muscle Aches		✓
 Sneezing	✓	
 Sore Throat	✓	
 Stuffy/ Runny Nose	✓	✓
 Watery Eyes	✓	

Preventing Colds and Flu



Get the flu shot.



Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.



Avoid sharing eating utensils or cups to prevent spreading germs.



Drink lots of fluids, especially water.



Get plenty of rest and sleep.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and soiled items.



Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.

Did You Know?

- The flu may cause cold symptoms, but is a serious disease that can be fatal, even for healthy people.
- The flu virus changes each year, so getting vaccinated yearly is important.
- The flu virus can survive on hard surfaces for 48 hours.
- The viruses used in flu shots cannot cause the flu.

The Best Defense Against the Flu Is Vaccination



The flu shot is the single best way to protect you and your family from the flu every year. Call your primary care doctor or pediatrician today to schedule an appointment for your yearly vaccine. It takes about 2 weeks for the vaccination to take effect and provide protection against the flu.

COLD and FLU Treatment



If your symptoms don't improve or you start noticing new symptoms, seek medical attention from your primary care doctor or pediatrician.

If your doctor is not available, or you don't have time to schedule an appointment, go to the nearest UH Convenient Care or UH Urgent Care.

Or perhaps, you can take advantage of UH Virtual Visit – a face-to-face visit or phone call with a doctor from home.

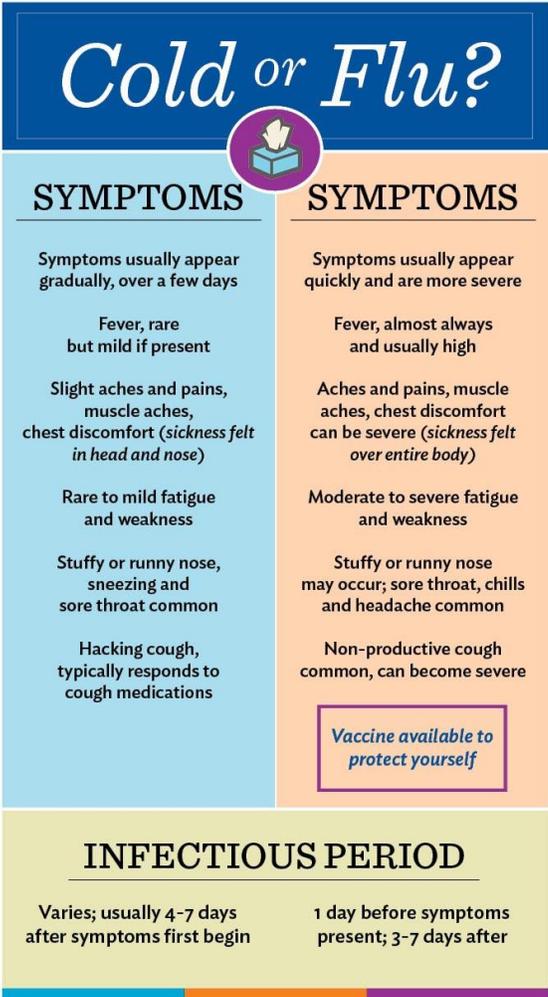
To find a location near you, visit [UHHospitals.org/Locations](https://www.uhhospitals.org/Locations).

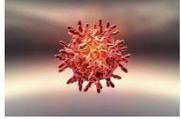
Cold vs. Flu

Accessed on 11/14/19

Source: University Hospitals

<https://www.uhhospitals.org/Healthy-at-UH/articles/2018/11/cold-vs-flu-symptoms-how-to-tell-the-difference>

<p>Instagram 3</p>	 <p>Cold or Flu?</p> <p>SYMPTOMS</p> <p>Symptoms usually appear gradually, over a few days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever, rare but mild if present Slight aches and pains, muscle aches, chest discomfort (<i>sickness felt in head and nose</i>) Rare to mild fatigue and weakness Stuffy or runny nose, sneezing and sore throat common Hacking cough, typically responds to cough medications <p>SYMPTOMS</p> <p>Symptoms usually appear quickly and are more severe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever, almost always and usually high Aches and pains, muscle aches, chest discomfort can be severe (<i>sickness felt over entire body</i>) Moderate to severe fatigue and weakness Stuffy or runny nose may occur; sore throat, chills and headache common Non-productive cough common, can become severe <p><i>Vaccine available to protect yourself</i></p> <p>INFECTIOUS PERIOD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies; usually 4-7 days after symptoms first begin 1 day before symptoms present; 3-7 days after <p> UnityPoint Clinic</p>	<p>Cold or Flu? Accessed on 11/14/19 Source: Unity Point Health https://www.unitypoint.org/livewell/article.aspx?id=899e947e-41ac-44bc-b498-d71703de8331</p>
<p>Instagram 4</p>		
<p>Instagram 5</p>		

	Infographic	Website	Caption (if provided)	When accessed	Permission
<p>Instagram 1</p>		<p>https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/understanding-common-cold-virus</p>	<p>Human Rhinovirus</p>	<p>11/14/19</p>	<p>Source: Wellcome Images</p>
<p>Instagram 2</p>		<p>https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/community/images/social-media/cdc-au-social-media-1200x628-about-au-graphic1-v04.jpg</p>	<p>Be antibiotics aware</p>	<p>11/14/19</p>	<p>Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</p>
<p>Instagram 3</p>					
<p>Instagram 4</p>					
<p>Instagram 5</p>					

RELEVANT HASHTAGS

	Hashtag
Hashtag 1	#CommonCold
Hashtag 2	#Sneezing
Hashtag 3	#Cough
Hashtag 4	#Sniffles
Hashtag 5	#Cold
Hashtag 6	#Flu
Hashtag 7	#SoreThroat
Hashtag 8	#Congestion
Hashtag 9	#HandWashing
Hashtag 10	#PreventACold

VIDEO (OPTIONAL)

Media	Image	Embedded link	Website	Caption (if provided)	When Accessed	By Whom	Permission
Videos							
Video #1		<pre><iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/UWgiyQV3nYc" frameborder="0" allow="accelerometer; autoplay; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture" allowfullscreen> </iframe></pre>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWgiyQV3nYc	How does a common cold work? (length: 3:03)	11/14/19	SV	Source: Brainstuff: How Stuff Works
Video #2		<pre><iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/_avTf7loHCU" frameborder="0" allow="accelerometer; autoplay; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture" allowfullscreen> </iframe></pre>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_avTf7loHCU	Infectious Diseases: Common cold or the flu (length: 1:12)	11/14/19	SV	Source: Mayo Clinic
Video #3							