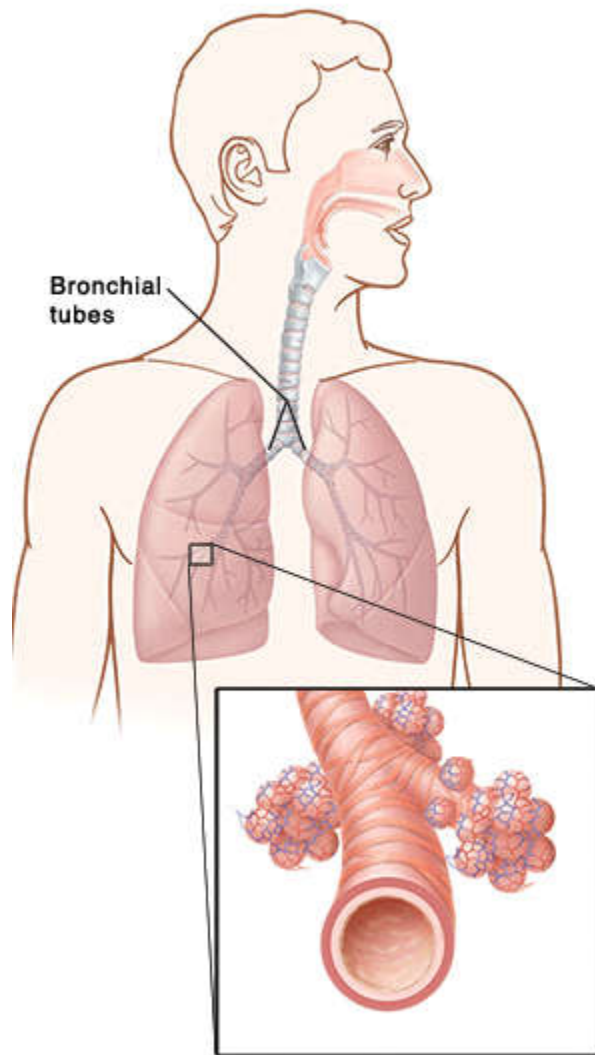


Viral Upper Respiratory Illness (Adult)

You have a viral upper respiratory illness (URI), which is another term for the common cold. This illness is contagious during the first few days. It is spread through the air by coughing and sneezing. It may also be spread by direct contact (touching the sick person and then touching your own eyes, nose, or mouth). Frequent handwashing will decrease risk of spread. Most viral illnesses go away within 7 to 10 days with rest and simple home remedies. Sometimes the illness may last for several weeks. Antibiotics will not kill a virus, and they are generally not prescribed for this condition.



Home care

- If symptoms are severe, rest at home for the first 2 to 3 days. When you resume activity, don't let yourself get too tired.
- Avoid being exposed to cigarette smoke (yours or others').
- You may use acetaminophen or ibuprofen to control pain and fever, unless

another medicine was prescribed. If you have chronic liver or kidney disease, have ever had a stomach ulcer or gastrointestinal bleeding, or are taking blood-thinning medicines, talk with your healthcare provider before using these medicines. Aspirin should never be given to anyone under 18 years of age who is ill with a viral infection or fever. It may cause severe liver or brain damage.

- Your appetite may be poor, so a light diet is fine. Avoid dehydration by drinking 6 to 8 glasses of fluids per day (water, soft drinks, juices, tea, or soup). Extra fluids will help loosen secretions in the nose and lungs.
- Over-the-counter cold medicines will not shorten the length of time you're sick, but they may be helpful for the following symptoms: cough, sore throat, and nasal and sinus congestion. (*Note:* Do not use decongestants if you have high blood pressure.)

Follow-up care

Follow up with your healthcare provider, or as advised.

When to seek medical advice

Call your healthcare provider right away if any of these occur:

- Cough with lots of colored sputum (mucus)
- Severe headache; face, neck, or ear pain
- Difficulty swallowing due to throat pain
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider

Call 911

Call 911 if any of these occur:

- Chest pain, shortness of breath, wheezing, or difficulty breathing
- Coughing up blood
- Inability to swallow due to throat pain