

The Common Cold

The common cold is caused by many different types of viruses. Usual symptoms can include sore throat, runny nose and watering eyes, sneezing, chills, and a general, all-over achiness.

Colds may be spread when a well person breathes in germs that an infected person has coughed, sneezed, or breathed into the air or when a well person comes in direct contact with the nose, mouth, or throat secretions of an infected person (for example, when a well person's hands touch a surface that the infected person has coughed or sneezed on).

To prevent the spread of colds:

- Make sure that all children and adults use good handwashing practices.
- Clean and disinfect all common surfaces and toys on a daily basis. (See "Cleaning and Disinfection" section.)
- Make sure the child care facility is well ventilated, either by opening windows or doors or by using a ventilation system to periodically exchange the air inside the child care facility.
- Make sure that children are not crowded together, especially during naps on floor mats or cots.
- Teach children to cover coughs and wipe noses using disposable tissues in a way that secretions are contained by the tissues and do not get on their hands.

Excluding children with mild respiratory infections, including colds, is generally not recommended as long as the child can participate comfortably and does not require a level of care that would jeopardize the health and safety of other children. Such exclusion is of little benefit since viruses are likely to be spread even before symptoms have appeared.