

# About That Bug: Viruses vs Bacteria

Plan Logo

Health Information

## Respiratory infections caused by **viruses**

### What is a viral infection?

An infection caused by one of many different viruses. Colds and the flu are examples of viral infections. The flu generally comes on more quickly than a cold and is usually more severe.

### Where do they come from?

When people who are sick cough or sneeze, they release viruses onto their hands and into the air. Viruses can easily be passed from one child to another when children breathe them in or touch virus-covered surfaces.

### How do I know my child has one?

If your child has a virus, symptoms can be a stuffy or runny nose, cough, watery eyes, feeling weak or tired, sneezing, aching muscles, or headache.

### How can I prevent them?

There is no medicine to prevent a cold. **Ask your doctor about getting a flu shot for your child if your child is between 6 months and 59 months of age or lives in a household with people who have certain long-term illnesses.**

### Should I call my child's doctor?

If the symptoms of your child's virus continue or get worse over several days, ask your child's doctor for advice.

### How can I treat a virus?

**Antibiotics cannot fight viruses. Antibiotics only work against infections caused by bacteria.** Ask your child's doctor for ways to treat symptoms at home. Always check with your child's doctor before giving your child any medicine. Some medicines may not be right for some illnesses or ages.

## Respiratory infections caused by **bacteria**

### What is a bacterial infection?

An infection caused by bacteria rather than by a virus.

### Where do they come from?

If your child has a cold or flu, sometimes a bacterial infection can develop because your child's body is "worn out" and unprotected against other illnesses.

### How do I know my child has one?

There are two kinds of respiratory infections:

#### ■ Upper respiratory infections

- *Bacterial sinusitis* may happen when an earlier infection traps bacteria in the sinuses (the air-filled spaces around the bones of the face)
- *Pharyngitis* is an infection in the throat

Symptoms of these include pressure in your face, headache, fever, sore throat, and a stuffy or runny nose

#### ■ Lower respiratory infections

- *Bacterial bronchitis* is an infection in the lining of the airway leading to the lungs
- *Pneumonia* is an infection in the lung tissues

Symptoms of these include coughing with mucus, breathing problems, and fever

### How can I prevent them?

Use the 6 tips on staying healthy (on the right) to help your children avoid catching one.

### Should I call my child's doctor?

Yes, especially if your child's symptoms continue or get worse over several days.

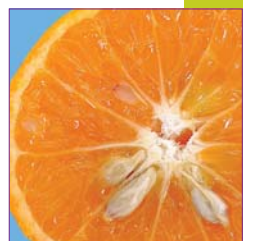
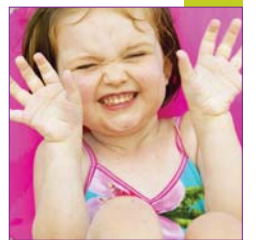
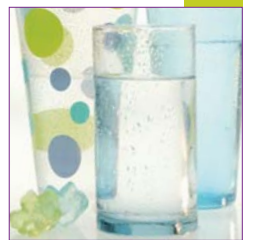
### How can I treat a bacterial infection?

**Bacterial infections are treated with antibiotics.** Even if your child feels better, always give the antibiotic for as long as your doctor tells you to, or the infection could come back. Do not share your child's medicine with anyone else.

## Staying healthy all year long

**These 6 tips can help. Make sure your children:**

1. **Wash their hands often and carefully.**
2. **Avoid touching their eyes, noses, or mouths.**
3. **Eat healthy foods as part of their daily diet.**
4. **Drink plenty of water.**
5. **Get plenty of sleep each night.**
6. **Don't share personal items such as cups, glasses, forks, spoons, or toothbrushes.**



It's important to always follow your doctor's instructions. The health information on this poster is not a substitute for medical care. If you have any questions after reading this brochure, please talk to your doctor or your healthcare professional.

This material is sponsored by Abbott Laboratories to help the public learn more about the appropriate use of antibiotics.