



Common colds? This is what you need to know

Are you suffering from the common cold? Don't worry, it is quite normal. Common colds are extremely widespread and are one of the most frequent reasons to visit a doctor. Even if the illness is often described by the doctors as flu, it concerns an acute infection of the respiratory tract. The respiratory tract covers more body parts than one would initially think. The mouth, the nose and the pharynx with the Eustachian tubes connected to the ears are a part of the respiratory tract. The respiratory tract also includes the paranasal sinuses connected to the nose, which extend up to the cranial bones, palatal tonsils and pharyngeal tonsils, larynx, windpipes and the bronchi. Therefore a common cold can lead to many symptoms that differ from patient to patient. Persistent sore throat and runny nose occur as the main symptoms in one person, perhaps persistent coughing in another, voice difficulties and earache in the third. Additionally, there are often general signs of illness such as headache, fatigue and fever.

Depending upon the area of the respiratory tract that is mainly affected, there are different diagnoses, which belong to the complexity of the common cold:

- Catarrh (Rhinitis),
- Nasal sinusitis (Sinusitis),
- Middle ear inflammation (Otitis media),
- Laryngitis (Laryngitis),
- Inflammation of the pharynx (Pharyngitis),
- Inflammation of the tonsils (Tonsillitis),
- Inflammation of the bronchial tubes (Bronchitis).

The majority of the colds are caused by viruses. The pathogens attack the mucous membranes of the respiratory tract and cause an inflammatory reaction there, which then causes the symptoms. Antibiotics are very important medicines that can save lives. They are very effective in bacterial infections such as lung inflammation. However, antibiotics are not effective against viruses. Hence they are not useful for a normal common cold. The same is applicable for influenza triggered by viruses (flu). Even if you feel very sick, an antibiotic treatment is not effective in this case. An antibiotic can be required only when a bacterial infection occurs in addition to the common cold or influenza viruses.

Your doctor will determine the type of illness and course of treatment by examination.

We wish you a speedy recovery!

So that you don't forget ...

You can write down the questions you want to ask the doctor:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....