

Health Beat

HEALTH, MIND & BODY

Can the Cold Give You a Cold?



By: *Carrie Timko, MD*
Primary Care, UPMC

during different times of the year.

During the winter months, outdoor temperatures drop, and humidity is low making the air dry. Add to this the increased time spent inside your heated house, exposing you to more dry air as well as environmental allergens, and you increase the chances of experiencing cold-like symptoms, allergies, or other respiratory issues. Additionally, the dry air, allergens, and cold temperatures can decrease blood flow to the nose and ears and may aggravate the symptoms of a cold.

Symptoms of a cold vary, but may include:

- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Congestion
- Slight body aches or a mild headache
- Sneezing
- Low-grade fever

If you do get a cold, the best treatment is to rest and drink plenty of fluids, especially water. Most colds go away on their own. Viral infections will typically clear up within seven

to 14 days. If your symptoms get worse or do not go away in 14 days, you should call your doctor.

You should also follow these simple tips when you have a cold:

- Wash your hands often and cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing to prevent sharing your cold with others.
- Use humidifiers and vaporizers, especially at night, to help ease respiratory symptoms.
- Use over the counter medications for symptom relief such as Tylenol, decongestants, and cough suppressants.

Preventing a Cold

There are ways you can protect yourself from common cold viruses and boost your immune system in the cold months to avoid getting sick, including:

- Avoid touching faucet handles and doorknobs in public spaces.
- Always practice good hygiene and handwashing – scrub with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not

available, alcohol sanitizers are acceptable. It's the 20 seconds of abrasion between the hands that matters, not the solvent.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Take a vitamin D supplement or eat foods that are high in immune system boosting nutrients, such as fatty fish, mushrooms, milk, and eggs.
- Quit smoking as nicotine decreases the ability of the tiny hairs in our nose and elsewhere to filter air and clear infection causing colds.

Carrie Timko, MD, received her medical degree from Drexel University School of Medicine, Philadelphia, and completed her residency at UPMC Williamsport Family Medicine Residency, Williamsport. She sees patients at SH Family Medicine at Lock Haven, 610 High St., Lock Haven. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 570-748-1250.

**ADVERTISE
YOUR
BUSINESS
HERE!
570-724-2287**

Buckheit
Funeral Chapel & Crematory, Inc.

*Tioga County's
On-Site Crematory*

Jacquelyn A. Buckheit
Supervisor, Owner
637 S. Main St.
Mansfield, PA 16933
Ph. 570-662-8888
Fax 570-662-1146



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



**Itty Bitty Basketball
&
Adult Volleyball**

At the Tioga County Branch YMCA
40-42 Besanceney Drive, Mansfield

