

UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION (URI)

An Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) is a cold caused by a virus that settles in your nose, throat or lungs. Most cold viruses take 3 - 14 days to go away.

Antibiotics are not effective against a viral infection.

CARE:

The following actions are not cures for your upper respiratory infection; however they can help to make you more comfortable.

- **Rest**
- Use **over-the-counter medication** for your specific symptoms (cough suppressant, decongestant, etc.)
- **Elevate your head in bed** to prevent sinus congestion and help reduce post-nasal drip.
- Increase the humidity or moisture in your home, especially where you sleep, by using a vaporizer or room **humidifier**. Use a cool mist (it holds more moisture than warm air) vaporizer, rather than the steam type.
- If you cannot get a humidifier or vaporizer, place a pan of water next to your heating vents and refill the water level daily. The water will evaporate and add moisture to your room. You do not need to add any medicine to the vaporizer. The humidity will help thin mucus and allow you to cough it up.
- **Drink** at least 8 large glasses of fluid a day. Fluids help keep your mucus thin and decrease congestion. Good choices are fruit juices high in Vitamin C, tea, jello, or broths and soups.
- **Avoid milk** products when you have a cold. Milk can increase the amount and thickness of mucus.
- **Do not use leftover prescription medicine** or medicines prescribed for other people.
- Apply **Vaseline**® or **Chapstick**® to your lips or around your nose to prevent chapping.

PREVENTION:

- **Wash your hands often** to avoid spreading cold germs. More germs are spread by the hands than any other method. Use a tissue and promptly dispose of it.
- Keep your **utensils and cups separate** from others in your room.
- Use alcohol-based **hand sanitizer** often and always after touching your face.

Contact Norton Medical Center at 508-286-5400 if:

- ~ you have trouble **breathing**
- ~ your **cough** worsens
- ~ you develop a **fever**
- ~ your symptoms are **worse after 10 days**