COLD
Patient Information Sheet

Causes of common cold
- Over 200 viruses can cause the common cold.
- The rhinovirus is the most common type of virus that causes colds.

Duration of common cold
A cold usually includes a runny nose, sore throat, sneezing and coughing. These symptoms can last for 10 to 15 days.

See a health care provider for:
- Temperature higher than 104° F;
- Symptoms that last more than 10 days; or
- Symptoms that are not relieved by over-the-counter medicines.

If your child is younger than three months and has a fever over 100.4° F, call your provider right away.

Treatment
Since the common cold is caused by a virus, antibiotics will not help you get better. A runny nose or cold almost always goes away on its own. Rest, over-the-counter medicines and other self-care methods may help you or your child feel better.

How to feel better
- Get plenty of rest;
- Drink plenty of fluids;
- Use a clean humidifier or cool mist vaporizer;
- Avoid smoking, secondhand smoke, and other pollutants;
- Take acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen to relieve pain or fever. (Check with your provider or pharmacist about what medications are safe for infants and children;) and
- Use a decongestant or saline nasal spray to help with sinus pressure or runny nose (decongestant only safe for those over age 2).

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Oregon AWARE
Alliance Working for
Antibiotic Resistance Education

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