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).

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