Cold Instructions

See Dr Conover's *The Common Cold* handout.

All of the following are available without a prescription:

- Adults and older kids: use oxymetazoline (Afrin or similar) 12-hour nasal spray for up to 10 days, no more. Younger kids use the children's version. Babies should not use.
- Adults: Use Ocean Complete Sinus Irrigation frequently. Kids use Ocean spray. Use the spray on babies, and then suck out all the boogers with a blue bulb syringe.
- Adults and kids (but not babies): Get a sinus mask that you can heat in your microwave to apply heat to your sinuses.
- Use naproxen (e.g., Aleve) for adults, or ibuprofen for kids and babies, for aches and to help suppress cough.
- Use honey to help suppress cough
- Avoid Tylenol (makes nose more stuffy, and makes you sick longer), Robitussin and Mucinex (useless), Dayquil and Nyquil and the like (lots of side effects.)
- Zinc lozenges (e.g., ZiCam) for adults and kids (but not babies) will shorten your cold by two days and make you feel better.

If you get to 10 days from the start of your cold, and you aren't significantly improving (colds last 7-14 days, 3 days longer for smokers), then call back for a prescription for an antibiotic and steroid nasal spray.

Afrin – Sinuses

Use oxymetazoline (e.g., Afrin) spray, twice a day, for less than 10 days. Lie flat on your back, with your head hanging off the bed, so the spray gets to the top of the nose where the sinus orifices drain out into the nose.

Nasacort

Steroid nasal spray is available by prescription, as a generic and under several brand names. It is also available without a prescription under the tradenames Nasacort (triamcinolone), Flonase (fluticasone) and Rhinocort (Budesonide), all of which work similarly well. The cost is about $15-20/bottle at most pharmacies.

Steroid – Sinuses

Use the steroid nasal spray, twice a day for 3 days and then daily after that. Squirt it up your nose, then lie flat on your back, with your head hanging off the bed, so the spray gets to the top of the nose where the sinus orifices drain out into the nose. If you are using this with Afrin (oxymetazoline) decongestant spray, use the Afrin FIRST, wait for 10 minutes (it just take a few minutes to work), and THEN use the steroid spray. The steroid spray takes several hours to take effect.