

Management of Common Health Problems

Upper respiratory tract infection (Common Cold)

- There are no cures for the common cold
- Colds are caused by various strains of viruses that cannot be cured by antibiotics
- Most colds last 4-5 days, however some colds may last 2-4 weeks in diminishing severity
- Colds are spread person to person by kiss, cough, sneeze and mucus, which can linger on books, towels, stair rails, etc
- Colds are usually self-limiting and are managed with rest (8-10 hour of sleep), fluids (8 cups water) , salt water gargles for sore throats and stress reduction
- Over the counter medication (pain relievers, lozenges, nasal sprays, cough syrup or oral decongestants) may reduce your symptoms
- If symptoms are not improving or seem to be worsening contact Student Health Services at 716-829-3316

Flu (influenza)

- Influenza is one of the most common winter-time illness caused by influenza viruses
- Flu season is generally between October and February
- A flu shot may help prevent the contraction of the influenza virus
- Common symptoms consist of fever, chills, aches and pains, headaches, weakness and dry cough
- Flu symptoms usually occur abruptly
- Fever may last for 3-4 days and symptoms should improve within one week, although weakness and dry cough may persist for a couple of weeks
- The only real cure for a flu is time (antibiotics are ineffective against a virus)
- Bed rest, drinking plenty fluids, and taking a fever reducer such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen may help improve symptoms
- If you have a chronic health condition such as Diabetes, heart, lung or kidney disease you should be under the care of a health professional
- If symptoms are not improving or seem to be worsening contact Student Health Services at 716-829-3316

Gastroenteritis (Stomach Flu)

- Gastroenteritis is inflammation of the stomach and intestinal lining.
- Common causes consist of intestinal virus, food poisoning, drinking contaminated water and excessive alcohol use.
- Symptoms begin 1-2 days following infection and may last for 1-10 days.
- Symptoms consist of abdominal pain or cramping, nausea and/or vomiting, diarrhea, fever and/or chills.
- Treatment consists of hydration (water), replacement of lost electrolyte such as potassium and sodium (by drinking Gatorade or Pedialyte). Get plenty of rest. Begin with a light diet when well tolerated (bananas, rice, apple juice and dry toast).
- Washing hands, cleaning food preparation surface after cooking meats, cooking food to safe temperature and refrigerating perishable foods promptly will help prevent food poisoning.
- Severe abdominal pain should be evaluated by a health professional.
- If symptoms are not improving or seem to be worsening contact Student Health Services at 716-829-3316.

Constipation

- Constipation is considered infrequent bowel movements (less than 3 per week), straining to pass stool, dry and hard stool and continued feeling of fullness after bowel movement.
- Persistent constipation can lead to hemorrhoids and abdominal pain.
- Treatment of constipation consists of eating a high fiber diet (bran cereal, whole grain foods and vegetables and fruits), ample fluids (6-8 daily cups of water) and exercise.
- Abuse of over the counter laxatives may worsen constipation, check with medical provider before use.
- If symptoms are not improving or seem to be worsening contact Student Health Services at 716-829-3316.