



COMMON WINTER ILLNESSES

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE!

Self-treatment of common minor illnesses is often all that is needed. Here are some simple things you can do at home to treat yourself and also prevent the spread of some illnesses (eg. the “cold”) by visiting the doctors’ surgery:

1. **COLDS/COUGH** – Rest and take plenty of fluids (non-alcoholic). If you have a fever or headache take PARACETAMOL or IBUPROFEN (available from chemists and supermarkets or the Students Association shop on campus). If you have a sore throat or cough take a cough mixture or throat pastilles. **Always read the instructions** on the medicine packet or box, and **never** take more medication than advised. If you have a fever wear light clothing, eg. T-shirt, nightwear, shorts or leggings.
2. **DIARRHOEA** – is usually caused by a viral infection and cannot always be treated specifically. It will generally last for several days then improve. Drink plenty “clear” fluids to replace lost fluids. Do not eat if you are hungry but do drink a little and often. When your appetite returns start off with dry biscuits or toast. The chemists and supermarkets all have medicines which will help the symptoms of diarrhoea. Once again **always read the instructions** carefully and if in doubt talk to the pharmacist or GP.
3. **COLD SORES** – the chemist can supply you with ACICLOVIR antiviral cream, which is very effective. PARACETAMOL is also helpful for reducing pain.
4. **CONSTIPATION** – can often be the result of a change of diet or a change in routine. To help constipation increase the amount of fluids you drink daily. Also remember “5 a day” advice, which encourages us to eat 5 portions of fruit or vegetables per day and increase fibre in diet. SENNA is a mild laxative available from chemists and most supermarkets.
5. **INDIGESTION** – try to eat a very simple and plain diet for several days and see if this helps. We often overindulge over the Festive period causing many people to have problems with excess acid and indigestion. There are various ANTACID REMEDIES available at chemists and supermarkets.

FINALLY – note **antibiotics do not kill viruses** so they will not always be prescribed by your GP should you visit the surgery. They do not help with colds or Flu and can in fact make symptoms worse!

For more information on Health subjects including a Health A-Z guide to a variety of treatments and conditions visit our website

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