

ISSUE 3

When You Have a Cold

Colds are not fatal, but they assure maximum discomfort to their sufferers. A person with a cold not only coughs and sneezes regularly but also has a runny nose, a fever, a headache, a sore throat, and **congested** nasal passages all at the same time. It is hard to concentrate or stay awake, yet it is also difficult to fall asleep. Even though it only **lasts** a day or two in its severe stage, the time of suffering seems endless. An odd but important fact is that, even though the cold is the most common illness known to man, repeatedly affecting nearly everyone, there is no known cure. **Antibiotics** don't work well because every cold virus is **unique**.

Do you rush to see the doctor whenever you get a cold?

1. Yes. That's what doctors are for — making us feel better when we're sick — isn't it?
2. I just take some aspirin and try to go about my normal routine.
3. I relax and stay at home, knowing I'll recover soon.



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- > **congested** : blocked with some liquid
 - > **last** : continue; go on
 - > **antibiotic** : drug used to kill bacteria and cure infections
 - > **unique** : being the only one of its kind



Sample Answers

- (A) I always tell myself when I get a cold to just stay at home, drink plenty of liquids, and get lots of sleep until I feel better. But somehow, instead, I try to ignore the cold as much as I can. I take medicine and go to work, but I feel terrible all day, I don't get much accomplished, and I probably just **infect** other people. Maybe next time I'll take my own advice!
- (B) Patients want their physician to **relieve** their various medical problems. And the doctors want to be helpful, not only because of their professional obligation but also because they know the patient will find a new doctor if they don't help. But this mutual attitude has led to some very severe problems, related especially to the overuse of antibiotics. So viruses are **adapting** themselves to the most widely used drugs and making them ineffective. So I never go to the doctor for some minor **ailment** like a cold. I want those vaccines to be useful when I really need them!

SPEAK YOUR MIND

1. How often do you feel tired? What do you do at those times?
2. How often do you catch a cold? How do you find relief from it?
3. Do you sometimes have a stomachache? How do you **cope with** it?
4. Do you ever **suffer from** a headache? Do you take aspirin or deal with it some other way?
5. Do you regularly take vitamins?
6. Have you ever suffered from **insomnia**? What did you do?
7. Are you afraid of the **side effects** of any medicine?

> **infect** : cause disease or illness

> **relieve** : ease

> **adapt** : change, adjust to new circumstances

> **ailment** : physical disorder, illness

> **cope with** : deal with

> **suffer from** : experience physical or mental pain

> **insomnia** : inability to sleep; sleeplessness

> **side effect** : result that a drug has, in addition to curing pain or illness

Speak Your Mind Helpers

1. How often do you feel tired? What do you do at those times?

- (A) These days I seem to get tired a lot more than I used to. Maybe I need to go to bed earlier or sleep longer.
- (B) I hardly ever feel tired. I almost always get plenty of sleep and avoid eating heavy meals. And I pace my activities during the day to keep from getting **overwhelmed** by work.

2. How often do you catch a cold? How do you find relief from it?

- (A) Every spring, I have colds almost constantly. It's probably some kind of **allergy**. Getting relief is almost impossible. I've tried various medicines, but they just make me **drowsy** and **inattentive**, so I merely feel worse. Even the sneezing is better than that!
- (B) I catch a cold every now and then, but I usually don't have much trouble coping with it. I just go to the pharmacy and buy some cold medicine, drink lots of orange juice and vodka, and get a good night's sleep. I feel fine the next day.

3. Do you sometimes have a stomachache? How do you cope with it?

- (A) I have a very weak stomach, and what I eat doesn't often agree with me. So I have lots of stomach aches, **heartburn**, and **diarrhea**. I guess there's nothing I can do except watch my diet and make sure there's a bathroom nearby.
- (B) Once in a while I overeat and suffer the consequences, but this is very rare. Mostly, I eat whatever I like, and as much as I want, and don't have any problems.

> **overwhelm** : completely overpower

> **allergy** : unusual physical reaction to certain foods or substances

> **drowsy** : tired and almost asleep

> **inattentive** : not giving enough attention

> **heartburn** : type of indigestion that feels like a burning in one's chest

> **diarrhea** : condition in which bowel movements are frequent and watery

Speak Your Mind Helpers

4. Do you ever suffer from a headache? Do you take aspirin or deal with it some other way?

(A) I get a slight pain in the back of my head almost every day. But I just close my eyes and relax for a few minutes and it usually goes away. If it doesn't, then I'll take a couple of aspirins. But it's not a serious problem.

(B) I don't get headaches, I get migraines. The side of my head feels like it's going to explode. Aspirin doesn't help, and neither do the other over-the-counter medicines. I have to get a powerful pain killer prescription, and even they don't help all the time. Eventually the migraine goes away, but until that happens, the pain is absolutely unbearable.

5. Do you regularly take vitamins?

(A) Ever since I was a child, I've taken vitamins every day. There's no need to overdo it — once the body absorbs the maximum intake, it has no way to store any excess, so the remainder is just wasted. But I like to make sure that my body gets everything it needs to stay healthy.

(B) Sometimes I get in the habit of taking vitamins every day with breakfast, but if I miss a few days, I forget about taking them anymore. I guess it doesn't matter, though, since I feel the same whether I take them or not.

> **migraine** : very severe headache that usually affects one side of the head and tends to happen repeatedly
> **over-the-counter medicine** : drugs which can be bought without a prescription
> **prescription** : particular medication issued by a pharmacist upon a physician's advice
> **unbearable** : so extreme that one cannot deal with it > **overdo** : do too much of (sth)
> **absorb** : take in > **intake** : amount of a chemical or other substances that enters one's body

Speak Your Mind Helpers

6. Have you ever suffered from insomnia? What did you do?

- (A) I can't ever get to sleep easily. I **toss and turn** in bed, I get up and fix something to eat, I read a book, I try exercising, but nothing works. Maybe I'll finally fall asleep an hour or so before I have to get up for work, but then I feel even worse than if I'd gotten no sleep at all. Eventually, after several days, it all **catches up with me**, and then I fall into a deep sleep that nobody can wake me from. This is not a fun lifestyle!
- (B) Once in a while, just before a big test, I can't sleep. So the next day, as a result, I do poorly on the test, and then that night I **sleep like a baby**. It's not a regular problem, but I wish I knew how to deal with it more effectively.



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- > **toss and turn** : be unable to sleep, or sleep badly
 - > **catch up with (sb)** : begin to have an effect on (sb) after a delay
 - > **sleep like a baby** : sleep very well/soundly

7. Are you afraid of the side effects of any medicine?

F: Do you ever worry about the side effects of any medicines you're taking?

M: Why, no. I just follow the instructions carefully. Why do you ask? Is my skin turning green or something?

F: No, but I'm afraid mine might. I hardly ever take medicine, not even aspirin, but my doctor just prescribed a whole **slew** of them for my back pain, and I'm worried about how they might affect me.

M: Well, prescribing medicines is not an exact science. Sometimes the drugs will affect one person differently than another. People have different **tolerances**, and some people are allergic to certain medicines. So if you have any **adverse** effects, it might be a good idea to **discontinue** their use and see your doctor again right away.

F: Yes, that's what the doctor told me. How likely is it that I'll have problems?

M: **The odds are in your favor**. Medicines are pretty **exhaustively** tested before they're allowed on the market, and very few people have any trouble as long as they follow the directions carefully. But there's always that odd exception, so watch yourself. Be careful.

F: This is the reason why I usually avoid medicines: I'm afraid of the after-effects.

M: Being a little cautious is good for everyone, but I wouldn't worry so much. The doctors usually don't offer prescriptions to medicines they're not familiar with.

F: But I hear horror stories about people who follow directions carefully and still have something terrible happen. They get a heart attack or go blind or something like that! I'm very concerned.

M: Usually the side effects are minor but unpleasant. People get **blurred** vision or stomach **cramps** or something like that. But they're just having a bad case of anxiety attack.

F: Really? What do you think I should do?

M: Why don't you see a doctor? He can probably prescribe something else that will calm your **nerves**.

> **slew** : large number

> **tolerance** : ability to withstand

> **adverse** : not favorable; going against something, or causing harm

> **discontinue** : stop

> **the odds are in (sb's) favor** : chances are good

> **exhaustively** : thoroughly

> **blurred** : unclear

> **cramp** : sudden severe pain

> **nerves** : worry or anxiety