

3. Colds and Flu

For the Teacher

Health Notes on Colds and Flu

Colds and the flu are both caused by viruses, and are easily spread from one person to the next via coughing, sneezing or touching an object that has the virus on it and then touching one's eyes or mouth.

While there may be a certain amount of overlap between symptoms of the two infections, generally a cold involves a “runny nose” and sneezing and little, if any, fever. It tends to start slowly. The flu (influenza), on the other hand, often comes on abruptly and is usually accompanied by muscle aches, fever and general body weakness. Often with the flu, there is fatigue that lasts for one or more weeks after other symptoms have disappeared.

Sore throat and coughing can be symptoms of either type of infection. But typically, the cough associated with the flu is more severe and lasts for a longer time.

There is no cure for the “common” cold or the flu, although over-the-counter remedies (*see chart in this unit*) can relieve or reduce some of the symptoms. Caution should be taken to follow the directions on the medicine label, and not to take more than the recommended dosage.

If one has a specific health condition such as asthma or high blood pressure, it is important to check with a health care provider before taking any over-the-counter remedies. For example, individuals with high blood pressure should not take decongestants, and those with asthma may need to avoid pain relief medications such as aspirin and ibuprofen.

Aspirin should not be given to children with the flu, as it may cause Reye's syndrome, a potentially fatal disease of the liver and central nervous system.

Drinking fluids — particularly water or juice — is good idea in cases of both flu and colds. Fluids can help to loosen mucus as well as prevent dehydration. Alcohol should be avoided, as it can increase dehydration. Smoking should also be avoided.

Getting adequate rest is also important. Furthermore, in order to prevent the spread of the disease to others, one should stay home during the contagious phase.

Antibiotics are not useful in the treatment of colds and flu, and should not be taken in most cases — unless prescribed by a physician for the treatment of a secondary bacterial infection. In the past, many physicians routinely prescribed antibiotics “just in case” there was a bacterial infection. This practice and other overuses of antibiotics have led to the growth of antibiotic-resistant disease strains.

Flu shots are one way to prevent the disease, and can be given to most people (except those allergic to eggs) over the age of six months. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, flu shots are very important for those most likely to develop complications (such as pneumonia) or become seriously ill. This group includes: individuals over age 65; those living in nursing homes;

those (over 6 months old) with chronic heart and lung conditions, kidney disease or immune system disorders (such as HIV/AIDS); pregnant women; children between the ages of 6 and 23 months; children on aspirin therapy; and individuals with chronic respiratory conditions.

The flu shot is also recommended for individuals who frequently come in contact with persons at high risk of complications. This group would include those who work in nursing homes, hospitals or daycare centers, as well as those who care for such individuals at home.

Key Health Points to Emphasize in Unit 2

- Be careful to read labels if taking over-the-counter remedies
- Wash hands frequently, especially after touching shared objects, such as a subway pole or equipment in a gym
- Avoid touching eyes or mouth
- Antibiotics will not treat colds or flu
- Who needs a flu shot

Sources

www.familydoctor.org
www.fda.gov
www.fda.gov/womens/getthefacts/flu.html
www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm
www.nyc.gov

3. Colds and Flu

Objectives Learners will:

- Reinforce symptom vocabulary.
- Learn the differences between colds and flu.
- Learn the over-the counter (OTC) remedies for colds and flu.
- Learn prevention for colds and flu.
- Learn when to call the doctor for colds and flu.

Materials Needed Board or chart paper

Markers

Handouts: 3a (Is It a Cold or the Flu?, with and without text), 3b (Picture Story), 3c (I Don't Want a Cold), 3d (Should I Call, chart), 3e (Should I Call Doctor, text), 3f (Flu Shots)

Audio CD



Activity 1 Colds or Flu?

[*Note to Teacher:* Two versions of worksheet 3a are available. One version has the text for students to read, the other does not have the text printed. Instead, learners listen to the recording (on CD) of the text. Choose whichever worksheet is more appropriate for your learners.]

1. Hand out worksheet 3a, "Is it a cold or flu?"
2. Go over any new vocabulary: "stuffy nose," "sign" and "usually."
3. Read the text to the learners, or use audio CD.
4. Ask learners to complete the worksheet chart.
5. Check as a class.

Activity 2 Picture Story

Preventing Colds and Flu

Illustrations:

1. *Man sneezes.*
2. *Man touches door knob.*
3. *Germs on the door!*
4. *Woman touches door knob.*
5. *Woman rubs eyes.*
6. *Woman sneezes.*
7. *Woman hands cup to boy.*
8. *Boy rubs eyes.*
9. *Boy gets sick.*

1. Hand out cartoon picture 3b, "Catching a Cold."
2. As a class, discuss the story and write a few words under each picture on the board.
3. Ask class to work with a partner, write sentences under each picture, and add an ending in the question mark [?] box (#10).

Activity 3 Preventing Colds

1. Hand out worksheet 3c, “I don’t want a cold! What can I do?”
2. Using the worksheet, ask learners how we can prevent a cold (elicit answers, write on board). Alternatively, in a slightly higher-level group, this can be done in small groups and checked as a class.
 - Wash your hands often.
 - Do not go near people with colds (if possible).
 - Use a tissue and throw the tissue away.
 - Clean things you touch with a germ-killing disinfectant.
 - Don’t touch your nose, eyes or mouth.
3. If the group’s level is high enough, introduce the word “prevention.”

Activity 4 Over-the- Counter Remedies

1. Ask the learners to fill in the top of the reverse side of worksheet 3a, “Is it a cold or the flu?”
2. Discuss, “Will medicine stop my cold?” [*Answer*: No, but can help you feel better (reduce symptoms).].
3. Say, “We are going to learn about medicines that can help your cold.” Read the list and explain. If possible, show an OTC product that corresponds to each item.
4. Show some medicine bottles (or pictures). Read the labels. Elicit suggestions for whom to call if you don’t understand the label [pharmacist, nurse, someone who is fluent in English].
5. Ask learners to complete the bottom of worksheet chart (“Rosa, et al.”). Check as class.
6. Discuss other ways to help yourself feel better: rest, drink liquids, use a humidifier.



Activity 5 When should we call the doctor?

1. Choose one of two ways to use worksheets 3d and 3e, “Should I call the doctor?” Hand out worksheet 3d. Read the text (or play the audio CD) and ask the learners to check what they hear. OR, allow the learners to work in small groups to check what they think is correct, then hand out the paragraph to read (worksheet 3e).
2. Check work as a class.

Activity 6 Discussion

What pain reliever should not be given to children with flu or other virus? [Aspirin: Danger, although rare of Reye’s syndrome. Children’s aspirin can safely be given for other ailments, but generally acetaminophen (*Tylenol*) is preferred for children.]

Activity 7 Flu Shots

Discuss who should get a flu shot [see Teacher’s Notes]. OR, use the cloze activity, worksheet 3f (Do I need a flu shot?).

Assessment

Administer the quiz on colds and flu. Check as a class.

Supplement/ Alternative

Use *Standout 1*, UNIT 6 P 103-107. Read the story and answer the questions.
Flu shot? www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/hhc/html/community/press-flushots.shtml. If you have Internet access, ask learners to look at the website and write down the nearest place for a flu shot

Is It a Cold or the Flu?



Directions: Read the information. Then fill in the chart.
Put a ✓ in the box. The first one is done for you.

Do you have a stuffy nose, sore throat, or sneezing? You may have a cold.
Are you tired, do you have a fever, headache and body aches? You may have the flu.
Coughing can be a sign of either a cold or the flu. But a bad cough usually is the flu.

| Symptoms | Cold | Flu |
|-------------|------|-----|
| Body Aches | | ✓ |
| Cough | ✓ | ✓ |
| Feel Tired | | ✓ |
| Sneezing | ✓ | |
| Headache | | ✓ |
| Fever | | ✓ |
| Sore throat | ✓ | |
| Stuffy nose | ✓ | |

Is is a cold or the flu?

1. Rosa has a fever. She has a headache and body aches too.
Rosa probably has the flu .
2. Tran is sneezing. He doesn't have a fever.
Tran probably has a cold .
3. Zakia has a cough. It is very bad. She has body aches and feels chilled.
Zakia probably has the flu .
4. Jenny has a stuffy nose. She doesn't feel very sick.
Jenny probably has a cold .
5. Eura has a fever .
She probably has the flu.
6. Vladimir has a runny nose .
He probably has a cold.

Now look at this chart.

| If You Want to Do This: | Choose Medicine With This: |
|--|----------------------------|
| Open a stuffy nose (help you breathe) | Nasal decongestant |
| Quiet a cough | Cough suppressant |
| Loosen mucus so you can cough it up | Expectorant |
| Stop runny nose and sneezing | Antihistamine |
| Ease fever, headaches, minor aches and pains | Pain Reliever (Analgesic) |

What medicines will help...

Rosa *pain reliever*

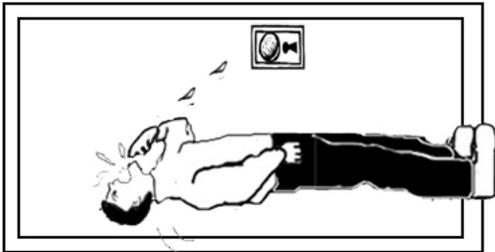
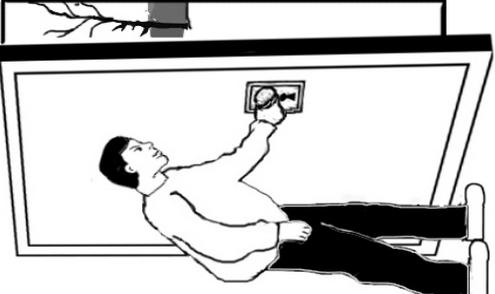
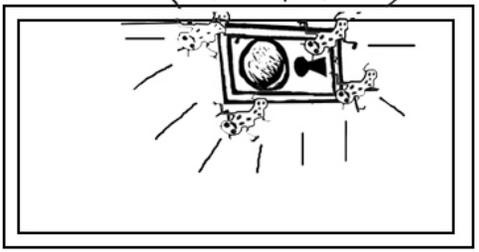
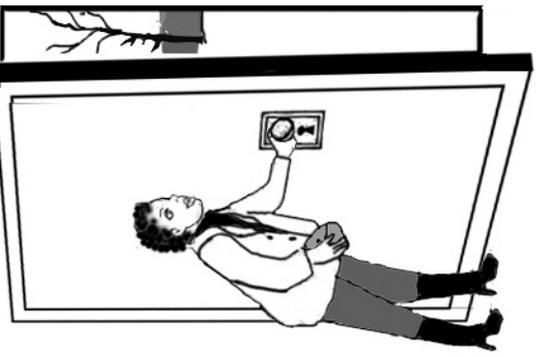
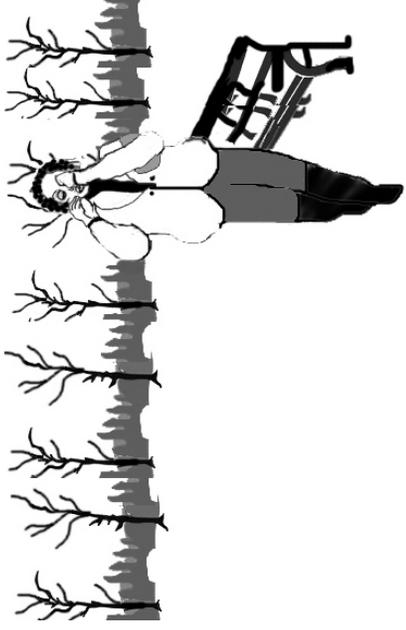
Tran *antihistamine*

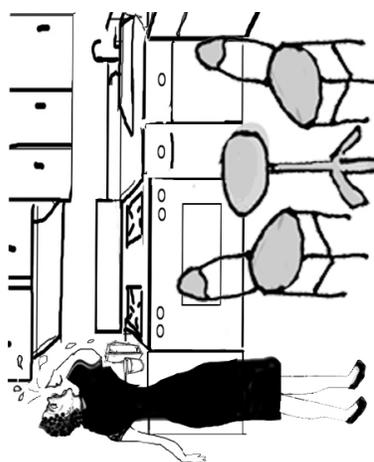
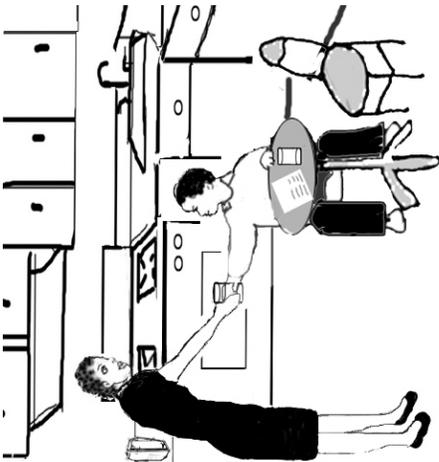
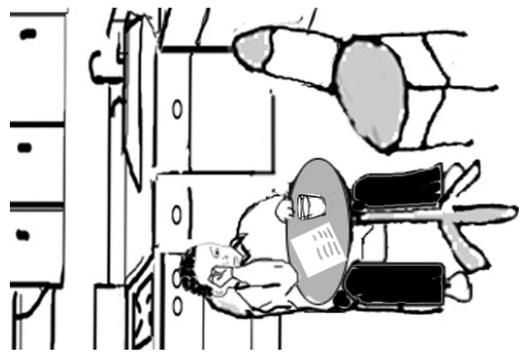
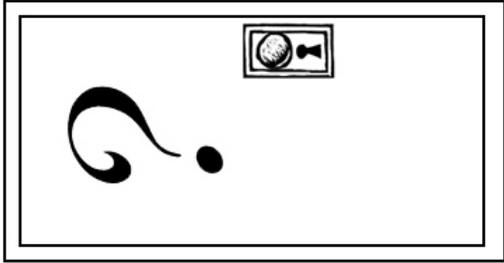
Zakia *pain reliever, cough suppressant/expectorant*

Jenny *nasal decongestant*

Eura *pain reliever*

Vladimir *antihistamine*

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1.</p>  | <p>2.</p>  | <p>3.</p>  |
| | | |
| <p>4.</p>  | <p>5.</p>  | |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>6.</p>  | <p>7.</p>  | <p>8.</p>  |
| <p>9.</p>  | <p>10.</p>  | |

Name _____ Date _____

I don't want a cold!!! What can I do???



1. *Use a tissue and throw your tissue away.*



4. *Do not go near people with colds (if possible).*



2. *Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth.*



5. *Wash your hands*



3. *Clean with a germ killing disinfectant.*

Should I call the Doctor?

Play the audio CD, read this to your students or hand it out to them.

You sneeze, or you have a sore throat. Is it the flu? Is it a cold? Do you need to call the doctor?

No, you usually do not have to call your doctor. But sometimes calling the doctor is important. Call your doctor if.....

- Your symptoms get worse.
- Your symptoms continue for many days.
- You have signs of a more serious problem. For example, vomiting, high fever, shaking chills, chest pain, or coughing with thick, yellow-green mucus.

| | |
|--|----------|
| You are sick for 2 days. | |
| You have a bad cough with thick, yellow-green mucus. | x |
| You have a high fever. | x |
| Your symptoms get better. | |
| Your symptoms continue for many days | x |
| You sneeze. | |
| Your symptoms get worse. | x |
| Your throat hurts for one day. | |
| | |

Adapted from the FDA's Easy to Read Publication, "*What to Do for Colds and Flu.*"
www.fda.gov

Should I call the Doctor?

Talk with a classmate.

Put a check by the correct answers.

Call the doctor if.....

| | |
|--|--|
| You are sick for 2 days. | |
| You have a bad cough with thick, yellow-green mucus. | |
| You have a high fever. | |
| Your symptoms get better. | |
| Your symptoms continue for many days. | |
| You sneeze. | |
| Your symptoms get worse. | |
| Your throat hurts for one day. | |

Do I need a flu shot?



Many people can GET a flu shot. But for some people, a flu shot is very IMPORTANT.

Are you 65 years old or older?

Do you have a special health PROBLEM, for example asthma or heart disease?

Do you visit or WORK with older people or people with health problems?

A flu shot may be important for you. Talk to your DOCTOR or health care provider.

Name _____ Date _____

Colds and Flu

Check **True** or **Not True** for each question.

1. You are age 65. You probably should get a flu shot.

True

Not True

2 You have a fever. You probably have the flu.

True

Not True

3. Washing your hands after a subway trip is a good idea.

True

Not True

4. When you cough, check the color.

True

Not True

5. You sneeze. You probably have the flu.

True

Not True

Name _____ Date _____

Colds and Flu

Check **True** or **Not True** for each question.

1. You are age 65. You probably should get a flu shot.

True

Not True

2 You have a fever. You probably have the flu.

True

Not True

3. Washing your hands after a subway trip is a good idea.

True

Not True

4. When you cough, check the color.

True

Not True

5. You sneeze. You probably have the flu.

True

Not True