

IN MEDICINE . . .

Colds, Coughs and Sniffles

When asked what is the most common malady I see in my office this time of year, I reply "upper respiratory infections or the common cold."

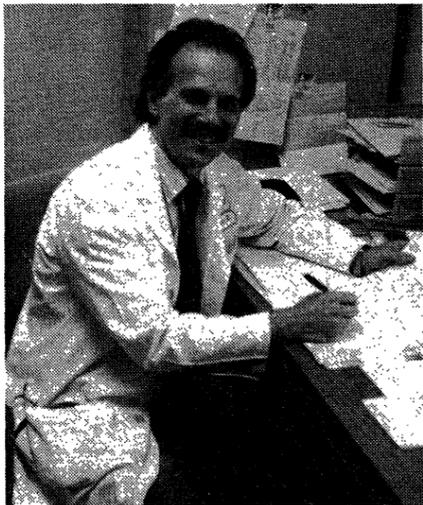
Since school started in September, we have seen a rash of these "colds" and related problems.

Colds or upper respiratory infections are caused by any number of viruses. The reason for the tremendous increase in the incidence of colds in the fall is largely due to kids being back in school. This is because there are a large number of children in a relatively enclosed space which causes any virus to spread quite readily and rapidly. The kids in turn spread the infection to their parents and siblings, and eventually to the general population as well.

Symptoms which usually last about a week, include nasal congestion, and fatigue sometimes accompanied by cough, sore throat, mild fever and headache. Treatments usually includes tylenol, fluids and rest. Over the counter decongestants and cough syrups can be added when indicated. Many people ask "when should I see the doctor?" This is not an easy answer, but I would say if your symptoms are prolonged or severe or if you have a complication or associated problem . . . these would include earache, sinus pain or discharge, a bad sore throat, a prolonged fever, a productive or nagging cough and breathing difficulties. These problems should be evaluated by a physician since they may

require some sort of intervention including prescription medication.

The next obvious question is how do I prevent a cold? Obviously a healthy lifestyle, proper diet and not smoking goes a long way. However it has been proven in studies that frequent hand washing will prevent many viral infections including colds. This is because the virus (or germ) can enter your body through your eyes by merely rubbing them with your hands. So if your hands are clean and therefore disinfected, then there's a much lower chance of getting the infection.



Dr. Louis B. Kapner
Family Practice Medicine

Early Detection . . . Your Best Protection

"This year, breast cancer, the most common form of cancer in American women, will be diagnosed in more than 142,000 women."

Public awareness of the importance of early detection of breast cancer is the subject of a nationwide campaign beginning this month. Spokespersons for the American Cancer Society's Awareness Campaign are Susan Ford Vance and her mother Former First Lady Betty Ford. They will be urging women to learn the facts about breast cancer and scheduling regular mammograms. The campaign's theme is "Early Detection . . . Your Best Protection."

This year, breast cancer, the most common form of cancer in American women, will be diagnosed in more than 142,000 women. Breast cancer is second only to lung cancer as the leading cancer killer of women. However, women whose breast cancer is detected and treated early have a significantly better chance of survival. The five-year survival rate for localized breast cancer increased to 90%. With the variety of medical options available today, women also have choices about the treatment of breast cancer.

Some of the facts you should know about breast cancer in the United States —Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in American women; it occurs rarely in men. One out of 10 American women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. 143,000 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed in 1989, and 43,000 women will die from the disease. Most breast irregularities are found by women themselves, yet

many women do not know how to perform breast self-examination and few do so regularly. Fewer than 20% of American women follow recommended guidelines for screening mammography, a safe procedure that can reveal small breast cancers up to two years before they can be felt. Screening should begin by age 40. Over 80% of breast lumps are benign, but any breast lump must be evaluated by a physician. Follow-up biopsy is often recommended. If detected early, breast cancer can often be treated effectively with surgery that preserves the breast. Breast cancer incidence increases with age, rising sharply after age 40. Two thirds of all breast cancers occur in women over 50 years of age.

Every woman is at risk for breast cancer. The risk of developing breast cancer increases if a woman has a family history of breast cancer, has never had children, had her first child after 30, began menstruating before age 12, began menopause after age 55, or eats a diet high in fat. However, most breast cancers occur in women who have no identifiable risk factors.

Every woman owes it to herself to have a mammogram or make an appointment before the holidays. The Wayne County Unit of the American Cancer Society and the Newark Wayne Community Hospital urge women to call and make an appointment, after receiving a referral from their doctor, by calling the hospital at 332-2241 or the American Cancer Society at 331-6480.

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