

Can cold weather cause a cold?

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The bitter winter elements can be brutal on the body. But is there any truth that you can "catch a cold" if not properly dressed outside?

Dr. Jesse Bracamonte, a Mayo Clinic family physician, explains why colds and other viruses are more common in the winter months.

When your parents told you to put on a coat before you go outside or you'll catch cold, there's a small kernel of truth to that.

"If you're a little bit colder outside, your body's immune system may just drop a little bit because it's spending extra effort to keep you warm. That's not with everybody, but, in some cases, it may predispose you to a cold," says Dr. Bracamonte.

But, he says, the [cold weather](#) itself doesn't cause the common cold. However, as winter temps dip down, the chances of spreading a [respiratory virus](#) go up because more time is spent indoors with others.

"When it's cold outside, typically people gather around the fireplace or around your home. Therefore, if people are sick, you're more likely to be in [close proximity](#) to someone who is ill, thus catch the cold," says Dr. Bracamonte.

He says if you do catch a cold or one of the common [viruses](#) that cause the common cold, it's important to remember that it's a virus in most cases not a bacterial infection, so antibiotics usually don't help. Staying hydrated, getting plenty of rest and eating healthy are all important.

"In most cases, for most healthy people, we call it supportive management: time, rest, [chicken soup](#) and just staying away from others is usually the best medicine," he says.

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