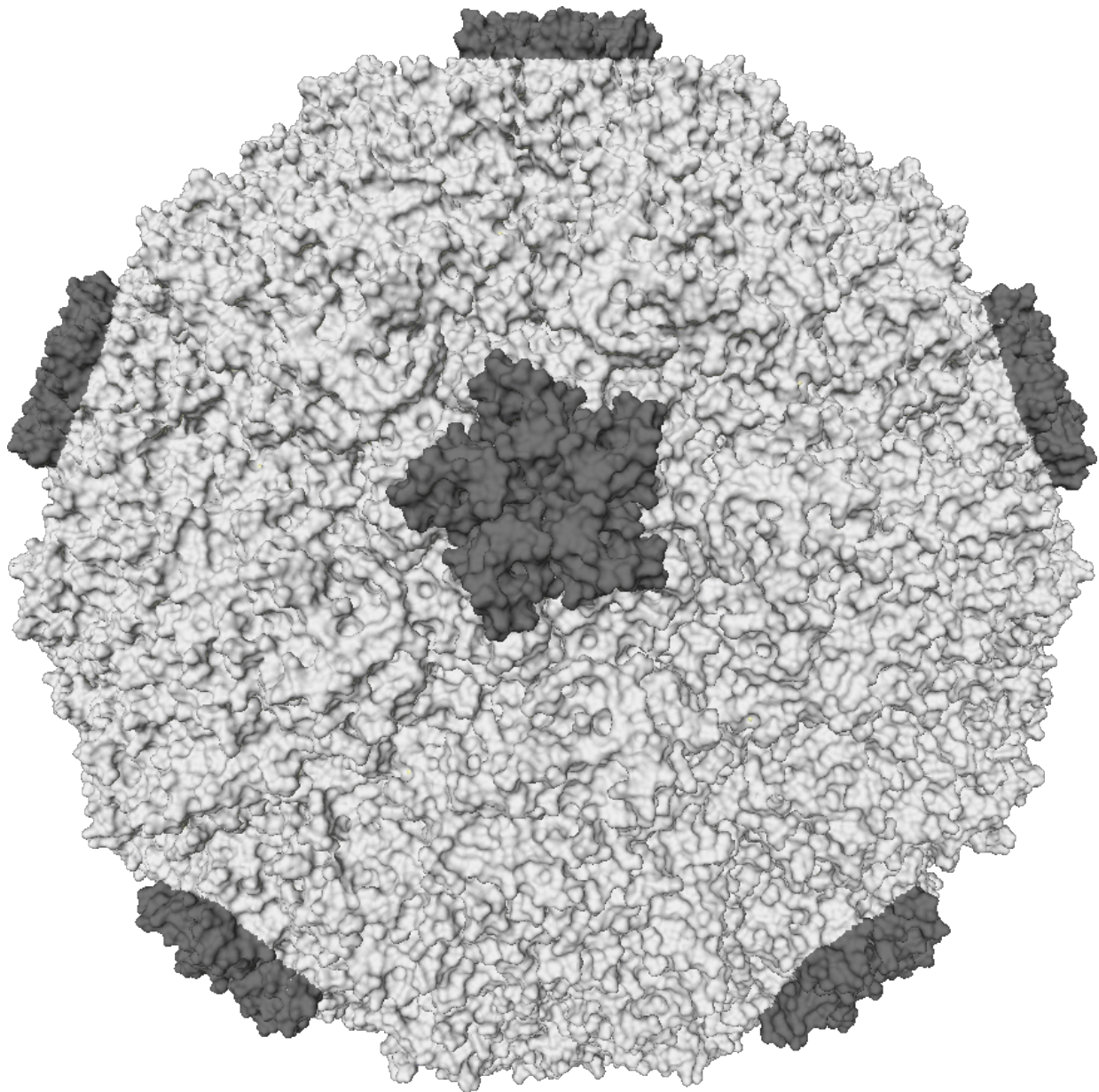


Home remedies: a case of the common cold

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A representation of the molecular surface of one variant of human rhinovirus.
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The common cold is a viral infection of your nose and throat (upper respiratory tract). It's usually harmless, although it might not feel that way. Children younger than six are at greatest risk of colds, but healthy adults can also expect to have two or three colds annually.

Most people recover from a common cold in a week or 10 days. Symptoms might last longer in people who smoke. If symptoms don't improve, see your doctor.

COMMON SENSE RULES

There's no cure for the common cold, but you don't need to feel miserable while you're toughing it out. Drink plenty of fluids. Try chicken soup. Rest as much as you can. Use saline nasal spray to relieve stuffiness. Gargle with warm salt water to soothe a sore throat. Turn on a humidifier. To prevent spreading your cold to others, wash your hands often.

To make yourself as comfortable as possible when you have a cold, try:

- Drinking plenty of fluids. Water, juice, clear broth or warm lemon water are good choices. Avoid caffeine and alcohol, which can dehydrate you.
- Eating chicken soup. Generations of parents have spooned chicken soup into their [sick children](#). Researchers say that [chicken soup](#) may be soothing because of its possible anti-inflammatory and mucus-thinning properties.

- Resting. If possible, stay home from work or school if you have a fever or a bad cough or are drowsy after taking medications. This will give you a chance to rest as well as reduce the chances that you'll infect others.
- Adjusting your room's temperature and humidity. Keep your room warm, but not overheated. If the air is dry, a cool-mist humidifier or vaporizer can moisten the air and help ease congestion and coughing. Keep the humidifier clean to prevent the growth of bacteria and molds.
- Soothing your throat. A saltwater gargle - to { teaspoon salt dissolved in a 4-ounce to 8-ounce glass of warm water - can temporarily relieve a sore or scratchy throat.
- Using saline nasal drops. To help relieve nasal congestion, try saline nasal drops. You can buy these drops over-the-counter, and they can help relieve symptoms, even in children.

In infants, gently suction the nostrils with a bulb syringe (insert the bulb syringe about to { inch, or about 6 to 12 millimeters) after applying saline drops.

- Taking Vitamin C. In most cases, vitamin C supplements won't help prevent colds. However, taking vitamin C before the onset of cold symptoms may shorten the duration of symptoms. Vitamin C may provide benefit for people at high risk of colds due to frequent exposure: for example, children who attend group [child care](#) during the winter.

PREVENTION

There's no vaccine for the [common cold](#), but you can take common-sense precautions to slow the spread of cold viruses:

- Wash your hands. Clean your hands thoroughly and often with soap

and water, and teach your children the importance of hand-washing. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Disinfect your stuff. Clean kitchen and bathroom countertops with disinfectant, especially when someone in your family has a cold. Wash children's toys periodically.
- Use tissues. Sneeze and cough into tissues. Discard used tissues right away, then wash your hands carefully.
- Teach children to sneeze or cough into the bend of their elbow when they don't have a tissue. That way they cover their mouths without using their hands.
- Don't share. Don't share drinking glasses or utensils with other family members. Use your own glass or disposable cups when you or someone else is sick. Label the cup or glass with the name of the person with the cold.
- Steer clear of colds. Avoid close contact with anyone who has a cold.
- Choose your child care center wisely. Look for a child care setting with good hygiene practices and clear policies about keeping sick children at home.
- Take care of yourself. Eating well, getting exercise and enough sleep, and managing stress might help you keep colds at bay.

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