The Common Cold

A cold is brought to you by any one of 200 viruses. Symptoms include: runny nose, red eyes, sneezing, sore throat, dry cough, headache, and body aches. Onset is gradual over 1 or 2 days. As it progresses, nasal mucus may thicken, which is the stage just before a cold completes its course, usually a week or two.

Children usually average 6 colds a year, adults fewer. A mouthwash will not prevent a cold, nor will antibiotics cure a cold. You can treat the symptoms for relief and to help prevent complications. If you seem to have a cold all the time, suspect allergies or sinusitis.

Treatment
- Get extra rest. Take care not to expose others.
- Drink plenty of fluids--hot fluids, tea, or chicken soup help relieve congestion and keep secretions thin.
- Take ibuprofen or acetaminophen to relieve aches.
- Humidify your bedroom and take hot showers to relieve nasal stuffiness.
- Use disposable tissues to reduce spreading of the virus to others
- Avoid antihistamines. They are not an effective treatment for colds.
- Avoid remedies that contain multi-symptom treatment. Treat each symptom separately. Take a cough medicine for a cough and a decongestant for stuffiness.
- Call a doctor if you develop signs of a bacterial infection, facial pain or fever--symptoms of sinusitis.