



## STOWE FAMILY PRACTICE<sup>SM</sup>

### Common Medical Questions (FAQs)

#### ***Cold and Flu***

**Q: What are symptoms of a common cold?**

A: A common cold is caused by a virus and it usually comes with no fever or a low grade fever, sore throat, runny nose, and cough. Symptoms are mild and usually last 7-10 days. Please call our office if the sore throat persists for more than 2 days, if the cough is worsening or if the sinus congestion/sinus pain lasts longer than 14 days and is worsening.

**Q: What are the symptoms of the flu?**

A: The flu is a virus and symptoms usually start suddenly with fever, chills, muscle aches, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose and cough.

**Q: When should I come in and be seen?**

A: If the sore throat lasts longer than 2 days, if your cough is worsening or if your sinus congestion has lasted longer than 7-10 days.

**Q: What can I do for my cold and/or flu symptoms?**

A: Get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids, gargling with warm salt water may help relieve a sore throat, over the counter medicines may help relieve some of your symptoms, use a vaporizer or a humidifier, warm compresses may help relieve sinus pressure. Honey can also help with a cough but should not be given to children under 2 years old.

#### ***Stomach Bug***

**Q: What is a “stomach bug”?**

A: A stomach bug or gastroenteritis is a virus that affects the gastrointestinal system and causes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, stomach cramps, and general malaise.

**Q: What can I do to help the symptoms of my “stomach bug”?**

A: Try taking small amount of fluids (2-4 oz) frequently throughout the day. Try eating small amounts of bland foods in small amounts (cereals, bread, bananas, yogurt). Please call our office if you cannot keep any fluids down, if you are not urinating at least 3 times a day, or if there are any symptoms of dehydration. The risk of dehydration is greatest in infants so parents should monitor how many wet diapers are changed when the child is sick. Please call our office if child is under 2 years old.

***Sinusitis***

**Q: What is sinusitis and what is the best way to treat it?**

A: Sinusitis refers to the inflammation and swelling that affects the lining of the sinuses and nose. The most common cause of sinusitis is a viral infection associated with the common cold. Symptoms can include nasal congestion, yellow and green nasal discharge, sinus pain, pain in the teeth. In most cases, these symptoms develop over the course of one day and begin to improve within 14 days. Strategies to help improve symptoms of sinusitis include: nasal saline irrigation/spray, acetaminophen or ibuprofen, and other over-the-counter remedies. If your symptoms last longer than 7-10 days and are worsening please call our office.

***Bronchitis***

**Q: What is bronchitis and what can I take for this?**

A: Bronchitis often occurs with a viral infection such as the common cold. It causes swelling and irritation of the bronchi, which are the large tubes that carry air into the lungs. The common symptoms can include all those mentioned under a common cold and also includes a persistent cough that can result in clear, green or yellow mucus. There are various OTC remedies that can aid with the cough. Also, steam or humidified air can help alleviate symptoms of bronchitis. Antibiotics are not helpful for most people with bronchitis since the illness is usually caused by a virus. You should call our office if your cough is associated with a fever, if you are having difficulty breathing, or if your cough is worsening and lasting longer than 10-14 days.

***Back Pain***

**Q: What can I do for my low back pain?**

A: Many things can cause low back injuries. The most common cause is using your back muscles in activities you are not used to, lifting something heavy, twisting, falling and stress. The best position to relieve back pain is to lie on your back on the floor with pillows under both knees. This can help take pressure off your back. You may need to rest your back for 1-2 days, anything longer than that can cause your muscles to weaken or stiffen. Try walking around for a few minutes every hour to help keep your back muscles

relaxed. Heating pads can help relieve muscle spasms. Ice packs and massages can also help. Over-the-counter medications can also help such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen and naproxen. Please call us if your back pain goes down your leg and below your knee, if there is any fever or vomiting, if you lose control over going to the bathroom, if your pain was caused by an injury, if your pain is so intense you cannot move around, if your pain is no better after 2-3 weeks.

**Q: Is there anything I can do to prevent a back strain?**

A: Don't lift by bending over. To safely lift an object, bend your knees and squat to pick up an object. Keep your back straight and hold object close to your body. Avoid twisting when lifting. Push rather than pull heavy objects. If you are sitting for a long period of time, take breaks to stretch and walk around. Exercise regularly because inactivity and weight gain contributes to low back pain.

## ***Head Lice***

**Q: What is head lice?**

A: Head lice are tiny and wingless insects that live and feed on blood from the scalp. They do not jump or fly. They spread by head-to-head contact, sharing of personal belongings or via contaminated personal belongings or home furnishings. Having head lice is not a sign of bad personal hygiene or an unclean living environment.

**Q: How do I know if a family member has head lice?**

A: The most common sign is intense itching of the scalp. The most common spots to find adult lice are along the ears and along the back of the neck. Live lice (louse) are usually grayish white and about the size of a strawberry seed. They lay eggs (called nits) that are attached to the hair shaft. Nits close to the scalp usually hatch in 7 days. Nits can be confused for dandruff but unlike dandruff they cannot be easily removed.

**Q: What remedies can I use to treat head lice?**

A: According to the CDC finding nits alone which are more than ¼ inch away from the scalp is not proof of an active infestation (they either already hatched or are not going to hatch). The clearest sign is finding a living and moving louse. Treatments only kill live lice not the nits. The nits can ONLY be removed by using a comb, see below. If you want to treat for lice wash hair (do not use a conditioning shampoo) and towel dry hair and apply Nix or Rid (both available over-the-counter) and follow package instructions. After rinsing, comb hair after treatment to remove as many nits as possible. Do not wash hair again for 2 days. You must comb for 15-30 minutes every day for 2 weeks until all nits are gone. Use a fine tooth comb (metal ones are best). You may repeat OTC treatment in 9-10 days. Do not treat a person who is infested more than two times, if what you are doing is not working please call our office.

**Q: What special things do I need to do around my house if we have had lice?**

A: Head lice survive less than 1-2 days if they have fallen off a person and cannot feed. Nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as can be found close to the scalp. Do not use lice sprays as they are toxic and highly flammable. Bed linens and clothing worn by the person for up to 2 days before the treatment can be laundered in hot water and dried in a hot dryer for at least 5 minutes. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry cleaned or stored in plastic bags for 2 weeks. Vacuum floors, furniture and car seats and throw away the bag.

**Q: What are the best ways to prevent a lice infestation?**

A: Ask your child not to share hats, scarves, coats, combs, brushes, hair accessories, and other personal belongings with their friends.

**Q: Can we catch lice from our pets?**

A: No. Head lice do not live on pets. Pets do not play a role in the spread of head lice.

**Q: My child has a fever how much fever reducer can I give him?**

A: There are two types of medicines you can use to reduce your child's fever and to also help alleviate symptoms. Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Advil/Motrin (ibuprofen). Both of these medicines come in infant-drops and a children's suspension.

**Tylenol can be given every 4 hours remember to use included dropper with infant drops and cup with the Children's Elixir**

<u>Weight</u>	<u>Infant Drops 80mg/0.8ml</u>	<u>Children's Elixir 160 mg/5ml</u>
6-11 lbs	½ dropper	----
12-17 lbs	1 dropper	½ tsp
18-23 lbs	1 ½ droppers	¾ tsp
24-35 lbs	2 droppers	1 tsp
36-47 lbs	-----	1 ½ tsp
48-59 lbs	-----	2 tsp

**Advil/Motrin can be given every 8 hours only to children older than 6 months Remember to use either dropper with infant formula or cup with children's suspension**

<u>Weight</u>	<u>Infant Drops 50mg/1.25ml</u>	<u>Children's Suspension 100mg/5ml</u>
6-11 lbs	<b>consult MD if &lt;6 months old</b>	----
12-17 lbs	1 dropper	----
18-23 lbs	1 ½ droppers	
24-35 lbs	2 droppers	1 tsp

36-47 lbs	----	1.5 tsp
48-59 lbs	----	2 tsp

### ***What is a Nurse Practitioner?***

Nurse Practitioners are advance practice nurses who have a Master's Degree and sometimes a Doctorate (PhD) Degree. They are state licensed and nationally certified. They provide high quality healthcare and treat a wide range of health problems. Besides assessing, examining, diagnosing and treating patients, a nurse practitioner also focuses on health education and counseling. Nurse practitioners work in a variety of settings including clinics, hospitals, emergency rooms, nursing homes, colleges and beyond.