

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



HEALTH DIVISION
Department of Health & Human Services

oakgov.com/health

Upper Respiratory Infection

What is an Upper Respiratory Infection?

An Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) can involve the nose, throat, and upper airway. It is usually caused by a virus.

Who can get Upper Respiratory Infections?

URI can affect people of any age.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, watery eyes and tiredness.

How long after exposure do symptoms first begin?

Symptoms begin within 12 hours to 5 days, but usually 48 hours after exposure.

How is it spread?

The URI virus is spread by direct contact or inhaling droplets. Some viruses are spread indirectly by hands and articles freshly soiled by drainage from the nose and mouth of infected people.

How long is the person contagious?

A person can be contagious several hours before onset of illness up to 5 days after symptoms begin.

Are there complications?

Prolonged URI symptoms may indicate a more serious condition and require an evaluation by a doctor.

Is there a treatment for Upper Respiratory Infections?

Antibiotics are not effective against viral Upper Respiratory Infection. Get bed rest, drink fluids, and use over-the-counter medications if recommended by your physician for treatment of symptoms. See a doctor if symptoms do not improve.

How can Upper Respiratory Infections be prevented?

- Reduce contacts with infected persons as much as possible.
- Cough or sneeze into tissues and throw away immediately. *Then wash your hands.*
- Use good hygiene and hand washing before eating and after using the bathroom.
- Avoid putting fingers in nose, mouth or eyes.

→
OVER

HAND WASHING INSTRUCTIONS:

- use soap and running water
- rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds
- wash all surfaces, including:
 - backs of hands
 - wrists
 - between fingers
 - under fingernails
- rinse well
- dry hands with a paper towel
- turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands

For more information on Upper Respiratory, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

For additional copies, visit our website at www.oakgov.com/health.