

the beat

Common Cold vs. Influenza Flu

According to Health Canada....Each year up to 25% of Canadians will contract the flu ...Up to 8000 Canadians will die each year from flu-related pneumonia.
(Health Canada, 2005)

COMMON COLD is a contagious viral infection of the upper respiratory system.

CAUSES: Most common infectious disease caused by the rhinovirus and coronavirus. Lack of sleep, stress, close quarters and decrease levels of Vitamin D can contribute to the susceptibility of contracting a cold.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS: Runny nose; nasal congestion; sneezing, coughing, watery eyes, headache, sore throat, and increased temperature.

TRANSMISSION: The common cold is transmitted via direct contact of droplets from an infected person (sneezing and coughing) and indirect contact (shaking hands, communal objects i.e. door knobs).

TREATMENT: Rest, adequate fluid and nutrition, medications for symptom relief: analgesics, nasal decongestants, cough suppressants.

COMPLICATIONS: Viral or bacterial infections involving the ear, sinus, tonsil, or lung.

PREVENTION: Perform routine hand hygiene; limit your contact with people who are infected; cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

INFLUENZA...is a contagious viral infection of the upper and lower respiratory system.

CAUSES: Influenza A, B or C

A: responsible for seasonal flu. Major cause for epidemics.

B: responsible for seasonal flu

C: causes mild respiratory illness. Not associated with epidemics.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS: Include common cold symptoms in addition to a combination of fever, muscle pain, chills, sweats, fatigue, weakness, loss of appetite, diarrhea, and vomiting. Symptoms are more severe than the common cold.

TRANSMISSION: The common cold is transmitted via direct contact of droplets from an infected person (sneezing and coughing) and indirect contact (shaking hands, communal objects i.e. door knobs).

TREATMENT: Antiviral Medications — Tamiflu or Relenza. More effective if given within 48 hours after symptoms present.

PREVENTION: Perform routine hand hygiene; Limit your contact with people who are infected; cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Get the annual influenza vaccine.

Biography



Lara Abrahams, BSc Nursing

Lara Abrahams is a Clinical Nurse Educator for Pulse Rx LTC Pharmacy. She began her post secondary career at York University working towards a Bachelor of Science in Biology when her career calling for nursing became clear. She graduated from Ryerson University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a minor in Psychology in 2009. Lara has a background in pharmacy as she worked as a pharmacy technician for seven years. She has been with Pulse Rx LTC Pharmacy for over a year; starting in a pharmacy technician role and transferring to a nurse educator role. She has been involved with developing the UCP training program offered by Pulse Rx LTC Pharmacy. Lara is also employed with the University Health Network working on a general medicine unit. Lara's career goals include pursuing graduate studies to obtain a Masters of Nursing.



10 sleep tips for shift workers

Studies show that sleep deprivation can lead to serious consequences for shift workers, including firefighters, police officers and medical workers. Here's a plan to help your body adjust to irregular work hours

1. Get your partner on board

Shift work is tough on the entire family. Make sure your partner knows how it will affect him — increased parental responsibilities and household tasks, less time with you — before you sign on for night or rotating work.

2. Give your body a three-day warning

If you're headed toward a major change in work schedule, begin to alter your sleep time three days in advance.

Let's say your usual shift is 5 pm to 1 am and you're moving to an 11 pm to 7 am schedule. If you usually sleep from 3-11 am, postpone your bedtime to 5 am and sleep until 1 pm on the first day of the transition.

- On day 2 postpone your bedtime to 7 am and sleep until 3 pm.
- On day 3 postpone bedtime to 8 am and sleep until 4 pm.
- On day 4 you'll begin the new 11 pm to 7 am shift. That day sleep from 9 am until 5 pm — and on every day thereafter.

3. Maintain a schedule

Keep the same sleep/wake schedule on your at-home days as on your workdays,

says sleep specialist Kar-Ming Lo, M.D. It will help your body understand when you need to be alert and when you need to sleep.

4. Work clockwise

If you work rotating shifts, ask your manager to schedule succeeding shifts so that a new shift starts later than the last one, recommends the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. If you've just finished a 3 to 11 pm shift, for example, you'll be more alert and sleep better if the next shift you work is 11 pm to 7 am.

5. Get outdoors

Once you wake up, get outside. Take a walk and sit in the sun. The sun will cue your biological clock that it's time to be alert.

6. Pass up opportunities

Shift work stresses the body big-time. It puts your health at risk and denies you time with your family. Even if you need extra money, think twice about accepting an opportunity to work overtime or extra hours or skip vacations. The price may be higher than the added income.

7. Get a pickup

Two-thirds of shift workers report driving drowsy after a shift — and drowsy driving leads to 400 deaths and 2,100 serious

injuries in Canada every year. Take the bus, hire a cab, have someone better rested than you pick you up after your shift and take you home.

8. Make sleep a family effort

Discuss your sleep needs with kids, says Dr. Lo. Tell the kids that "Mom's working hard and she works nights." Then ask that they not go into your room unless it's an emergency. And be sure to specify precisely what is — and what is not — an emergency.

9. Stick to Perrier

If you feel like a nightcap — morning cap? — make it water. Although alcohol may seem to relax you so you can get to sleep more quickly, what it actually does is disrupt your sleep later in the night. As a result, you get less sleep and sleep that's less than refreshing.

10. Forget the quick fix

There isn't any, although there are plenty of people around who will sell you one. One example: Sales of the herb valerian, which has historically been used to aid sleep, have reached more than a million dollars a year. Yet a review of 37 sleep studies reveals that it doesn't do a thing.

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111 Zenway Blvd., Suite #3, Woodbridge, ON L4H 3H9
Phone 905 856 1250 • Fax 905 856 2316
Toll Free 877 785 8511 • www.pulserx.ca

Toronto • Ottawa • London