Complications of Cold, Flu and COVID-19/novel Coronavirus can include bacterial infections such as bronchitis, ear infections or pneumonia; flare ups of asthma; dehydration. Full recovery from serious cases of flu or COVID-19 may take several weeks, with people experiencing prolonged fatigue and cough. While the vast majority of people with flu or COVID-19 will recover completely, it is possible for these diseases to prove fatal, especially for the elderly, those with compromised immune system, or with chronic diseases.
Managing Cold, Flu, and Coronavirus
Advice from Napa Valley College Student Health Services

Treatment

Influenza, the common cold and COVID-19 are all caused by viruses. Antibiotics do not work against viruses. In the case of the flu, some medications, such as Tamiflu, may shorten the illness by a day or two, or make it less severe. These medicines require a prescription from a medical provider.

Symptom Relief

Several over the counter medications and home remedies, while not curing the disease, help manage your symptoms and make you more comfortable.

Pain & Fever: Aspirin, acetaminophen (Tylenol), naproxen (Alleve) ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)
*Be careful not to take more than the recommended dosage of these medicines. Even though they are over the counter, they can cause severe side effects, even death if taken in excess. Be especially careful with acetaminophen. It is included in several over the counter combination medicines, and a person could easily take too much if they take several products on the same day.*

Runny nose and stuffiness:

Anti-histamines:
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl, others) is the most effective but causes sleepiness. Take it at night, or when you will not be driving, operating dangerous machinery, and so forth.
- Loratidine (Claritin), cetirizine (Zyrtec), fexofenadine (Allegra) – help a little bit, and don’t cause too much sleepiness.
- Chlortrimeton (chloramfimarine): in the middle. Not as effective as Benadryl, and causes a little sleepiness. I like it for day time.

Decongestants: pseudo*fed* (need to ask the pharmacist for it); phenylephrine.
- Somewhat effective, can make you feel wired; avoid before bedtime.
- Afrin (oxymetolazine) Nasal spray can be very effective but if you use it for more than 3-5 Days, you can get rebound symptoms when you try to stop.

Cough and Sore throat:

“DM” (dextromethorpham) is mildly effective cough suppressant; some studies have shown honey is more effective.
- Other cough suppressants require prescriptions.: Benzonate (Tessalon), is effective and non-sedating; narcotic-based (such as codeine cough syrup) can make you sleepy.
- Guifeneson (Mucinex) is supposed to help you cough up thick secretions. ?? effectiveness; Better to concentrate on staying hydrated.

Analgesic throat lozenges, or sprays such as cepacol can temporarily numb the throat.
- Warm fluids help sore throats, whether teas, soups, or gargling with salt water.
Managing Cold, Flu, and Coronavirus
Advice from Napa Valley College Student Health Services

General Measures

Rest, drink lots of fluids

**Chicken Soup** really seems to help; spices that make your eyes water (peppers, lemon grass, ginger) can promote drainage. (Hot and sour soup anyone?)

**Aromatic oils:** eucalyptus, peppermint oil, menthol, rosemary, thyme, mint, basil tea tree oils, *(Vicks Vapo-Rub)* can ease congestion, and may inhibit infection

**Humidify air or inhale steam**