



Worksheet 1. Reading: *Taking Care of the Common Cold*

Read the passage about the common cold based on information from the Mayo Clinic. Then review the glossary and complete the exercises that follow it.

1 If you catch a cold, you can expect to be sick for about a week. But that doesn't mean you
2 have to be miserable. These remedies may help your symptoms.

3 **Water and other fluids.** As soon as your symptoms begin, start drinking a lot of liquids.
4 Water, juice, clear broth, and warm lemon water with honey help loosen congestion and
5 prevent dehydration. Even if you are used to drinking coffee and caffeinated sodas, avoid
6 them when you have a cold since these particular drinks make dehydration worse.

7 **Salt water.** If you have a sore throat, a saltwater gargle may temporarily relieve the
8 soreness. Dissolve 1/2 teaspoon of salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water and gargle with
9 the solution several times a day.

10 **Saline nasal sprays.** Because they combat stuffiness and congestion, over-the-counter
11 saline nasal sprays are good to use. Most nasal sprays are safe and non-irritating, even for
12 children.

13 **Chicken soup.** You should add hot chicken soup to your list of liquids, now that researchers
14 have found scientific evidence that chicken soup really does relieve cold and flu symptoms.
15 When researchers compared homemade chicken soup with canned versions, they found that
16 most canned chicken soups worked just as well as soups made from scratch.

17 **Over-the-counter cold medications.** Non-prescription decongestants and pain relievers
18 offer some symptom relief, even though they won't prevent a cold or shorten its duration.

19 **Humidity.** Since cold viruses thrive in dry conditions, colds are more common in winter
20 when the air is dry. Dry air also dries your nasal membranes, causing a stuffy nose and
21 scratchy throat. A humidifier can add moisture to your home, but it can also add mold,
22 fungi, and bacteria if not cleaned properly. Don't use a humidifier unless you change the
23 water in it daily and clean the unit at least once every three days.



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24 Many people believe that vitamin C, Echinacea, or zinc may be helpful, but scientists don't
25 know yet whether or not this is true.

26 Researchers have concluded that among the treatments that don't work are antibiotics
27 (although they destroy bacteria, they are no help at all against cold viruses),
28 antihistamines, and over-the-counter cough syrups.

29 Recently, doctors and health officials have been reminding the public to take this
30 precaution: Wash your hands frequently and well after you have been in public places and
31 before you touch your face or any food or drink. If you do this, you might actually avoid
32 catching a cold, as hand-washing is the most effective preventive action against colds.

33 In case you do catch a cold, though, take these steps and continue them until your
34 symptoms subside: rest, drink fluids, gargle, use a saline nasal solution, and keep the air
35 around you moist. Although colds are usually minor, having one can make you feel
37 miserable.

Glossary

Line 4 *broth* — clear soup

Line 7 *gargle* — washing inside your mouth and throat by blowing
air through water or medicine in the back of your throat

Line 9 *solution* — a liquid mixture

Line 16 *from scratch* — make something without using anything that already existed or was
prepared beforehand

Line 17 *over the counter* — available without a prescription

Line 21 *mold* — a soft gray, green or black substance that grows on old food

Line 22 *fungi* — plural of *fungus*, a simple type of plant without leaves or flowers
which grows on other plants

Line 22 *bacteria* — very small living things, some of which cause illness or disease

Line 24 *vitamin C* — a vitamin that is also known as ascorbic acid

Line 24 *Echinacea* — a wild purple or white flower commonly found in the U.S. It is
often used as an herb or a medicine.

Line 24 *zinc* — a chemical element whose symbol is Zn





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Comprehension practice

Check all the completions that are correct, according to the reading. Some sentences have more than one correct completion.

- Some good treatments for the symptoms of colds are _____.
 - drinking a lot of liquids
 - gargling with salt water
 - drinking a lot of coffee
 - taking antihistamines
- Salt water is good to _____.
 - drink
 - wash with
 - gargle with
 - shampoo with
- A nasal spray helps your _____.
 - eyes
 - mouth
 - nose
 - stomach
- Additional things that have been proven to relieve cold symptoms are _____.
 - chicken soup
 - over-the-counter cough syrups
 - humidity
 - vitamin C
- Some helpful over-the-counter items could be _____.
 - decongestants
 - pain relievers
 - dry air
 - nasal membranes
- You should wash your hands _____.
 - after lunch and dinner
 - before you touch food
 - after you have been in public places
 - before you go to public places
- It's good to wash your hands _____.
 - because it helps prevent colds
 - since it makes you feel better
 - even though it's useless
 - as soon as you get sick
- Colds _____.
 - are usually very serious
 - last about a week
 - can make you feel miserable
 - should be treated with antibiotics