

**MSAD # 13 / RSU #83
Health Alert**

**Common Cold – Upper Respiratory Infection
Important Notice to Parents**

The common cold is a viral upper-respiratory infection that inflames the lining of the nose and throat.

Symptoms include runny or stuffy nose, watery eyes, sneezing, coughing, congestion, mild aches, pains, and occasionally fever. Nasal discharge is usually watery and clear at the onset but may become thick and discolored within a few days.

Colds are caused by viruses, not by drafts or failure to dress warmly.

The common cold is transmitted by direct contact, by respiratory droplets from sneezing or coughing, or by sharing items contaminated with saliva or droplets.

The incubation period for a cold is usually 2 to 3 days, but occasionally up to 7 days.

The common cold is infectious a few days before the onset of symptoms and while clear, running secretions are present. Exclusion from school is not necessary, regardless of the color or consistency of nasal discharge, unless the student is feeling ill or has a temperature higher than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit (F) or (38 C).

Colds generally disappear on their own within 14 days. If an ill individual contact develops ear pain, severe sore throat, difficulty breathing, or exhibits symptoms beyond 10 days, or if you have other concerns, contact your primary health care provider.

Colds are a viral infection and do not respond to antibiotics. Infants, children, and teenagers should not use aspirin unless prescribed by a health care provider because of its association with Reye Syndrome.

Handwashing, handwashing, handwashing is the best way to avoid a cold and prevent transmission to others. To keep from spreading a cold, cover mouth with tissue when coughing or sneezing. If no tissue is available, “catch your cold in your elbow” by covering your mouth and nose with the crook of your arm and cough or sneeze into your shirt or coat sleeve. Additionally clean or dispose of articles soiled with nose and throat discharges. Lastly, do not to share items that may be contaminated with saliva, such as food and beverages.

Please contact the school nurse, Mel Chadbourne, RN if you have any questions. More information is also available at the Maine CDC web site.