



Ask Your Pharmacist

Dispelling Common Cold And Flu Myths

by Lisa Chavis

(NAPSA)—According to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, Americans suffer from approximately one billion colds annually, making it the most common ailment in the country. As many as half of all Americans are diagnosed with the flu each year.



Lisa Chavis

Consumers may hear many common myths about colds and influenza. However, those myths can result in misdiagnosis, miscommunication and mistreatment. Armed

with the proper information about the differences between the two illnesses and the appropriate treatments for each, many people would stand a better chance of winning the common cold war.

Here are some of the myths and truths about colds and the flu:

Myth: The flu shot causes the flu. The flu shot vaccine is made from inactive virus, which means you cannot catch the flu from the vaccine.

Myth: Antibiotics should be used to treat the flu. The over-prescribing of antibiotics has the potential to be a global health care crisis. Disease-causing bacteria are quickly becoming resistant to many of these drugs. In addition, influenza is a viral infection and does not respond to antibiotics.

Myth: Chicken soup and herbal remedies are great treatments for cold and flu. While chicken soup may make you feel better psychologically, it has



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never been clinically proven to be effective in treating a cold or the flu. Appropriate treatments include plenty of fluids—including soup—and lots of rest. A variety of over-the-counter medications such as decongestants, expectorants and antihistamines are available to relieve cold and flu symptoms.

Myth: You can catch a cold from going outside in cold weather. With apologies to grandmothers across the country, you cannot catch a cold from going outside without a jacket during the colder months. However, you can catch a cold from other people who are infected through touching common surfaces or face-to-face contact.

For more information about cold and flu season, visit www.medco.com.

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