Upper respiratory infection is a general term for any kind of infectious disease process involving the nasal passages, throat and lungs. This is usually caused by a viral infection, although rarely may be bacterial. It spreads by respiratory droplets from coughing/sneezing, skin-to-skin contact or by sharing common items. Symptoms typically last 7-14 days.

**DIAGNOSIS**
Based on symptoms and physical exam.

**TREATMENT**
- Rest, decrease activity, avoid over-exertion
- Increase fluid intake, avoid caffeine, milk, carbonated beverages
- Gargle salt water (1/4 tsp salt in 4-8 oz warm water)
- Elevate head during sleep to reduce congestion
- Use humidifier/vaporizer if possible
- Nasal, sinus irrigation
- Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke

Because most URIs are caused by viruses, antibiotics are not used. Over-the-counter medications will not shorten the course of illness, but may relieve symptoms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONGESTION</th>
<th>Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed), Phenylephrine, Saline Nasal Spray, Nasal Irrigation (Neti Pot), Nasal Steroids: Flucatisone (Flonase), Triamcinolone (Nasacort)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAIN, HEADACHE, FEVER</td>
<td>Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), Acetaminophen (Tylenol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUGH</td>
<td>Mucus-thinners (Mucinex), Decongestants (Sudafed), Cough suppressants (Robitussin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SORE THROAT</td>
<td>Cough drops/throat lozenges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CALL STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES IF:**
- Temperature greater than 100.4°F persists for more than 3-4 days
- Severe headache, blurred vision, increased facial swelling
- Skin rash, painful joints, persistent vomiting
- Chest pain, shortness of breath, difficulty swallowing saliva
- Persistent greenish nasal discharge more than 7-10 days with no improvement

**RESOURCES**
- Mayo Clinic https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/common-cold/symptoms-causes/syc-20351605
- CDC https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/community/for-patients/common-illnesses/index.html

**SYMPTOMS**
- Sore throat
- Sneezing/coughing
- Congested, runny nose, post-nasal drip
- Swollen/painful tonsils or glands
- Watery eyes, ears popping, headache
- Low grade fevers (less than 101°F)/chills

**RISK FACTORS**
- Poor nutrition
- Lack of sleep
- Regular overuse of alcohol
- Dorm living (close quarters)
- Working with children
- Sedentary lifestyle

**PREVENTION**
- Eat healthy foods, exercise, get adequate sleep
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Wash hands frequently with soap, avoid touching eyes/mouth, cough/sneeze into your elbow
- Clean common surfaces such as counters and doorknobs with antibacterial disinfectant