COVID-19 - SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT

FOR NASAL/SINUS CONGESTION AND POST NASAL DRIP

- Daytime: try pseudoephedrine (e.g., Sudafed) following package directions for dosing. This decongestant pill is the most effective oral decongestant, but it must be requested at stores as it is kept "behind the counter" rather than out on the shelf. Don't take it near bedtime as some people are kept awake by it.
- At bedtime: try decongestant/antihistamine combination (per package directions for dosing), which is less likely to interfere with sleep. Antihistamine products used alone for cold symptoms are less helpful for most people because of drying or sedating side effects.
- Saline irrigation: try a sinus irrigation system (eg, McNeil Sinus Rinse, Neti Pot) per product instructions, to clear your sinuses and posterior throat of mucus, by rinsing them out with saline solution. Do not use tap water.

FOR FEVER (100.4 F OR HIGHER), BODY ACHES, HEADACHE, SORE THROAT

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) *regular strength* or *extra strength:* please follow the specific package instructions for dosing.
- Ibuprofen (e.g., Advil, Motrin): please follow the specific package instructions for dosing.

Many over-the-counter cold products (eg Nyquil, Dayquil) contain acetaminophen or ibuprofen in combination with other products, so *be careful to read labels to avoid excessive doses*. Similarly, read labels to make sure you know whether you are taking regular or extra strength acetaminophen, as this medicine is toxic at excessive doses. *Do not take aspirin to treat these symptoms.*

FOR COUGH

There is debate among experts about the usefulness of cough suppressants and expectorants for cough that comes along with a cold. Generally, a wet productive cough that produces mucus is good as it clears secretions. If your cough disturbs your sleep, try a hot drink, elevating your head a little on pillows, and humidifying your room. For a nighttime cough that may be interrupting your sleep you can also try a cough/cold combination medication with a sleep aide such as Nyquil.

An OTC cough medicine with dextromethorphan ("DM") (eg, Robitussin DM or generic equivalent, per package directions for dosing) may help some people who have bothersome dry, spasmodic cough. Guaifenesin (eg, Mucinex, per package directions for dosing), an expectorant, is available either by itself or as a common ingredient in cough/cold OTC remedies; some people find this product helps to thin and mobilize mucus.

See your provider if your cough is worsening, keeps you up without relief, or is associated with wheezing or shortness of breath. Other prescription medicine may be indicated.

SEEK EMERGENCY SERVICES IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Sudden dizziness/confusion
- Severe headache or abdominal pain
- Rash
- Stiff neck

For after-hours urgent health concerns call the on-call provider at Hahnemann Family Health Center of Worcester at (508) 334-8830 and identify yourself as a WPI student.