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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Trust Me, Cold Weather Doesn't Cause Colds

Recently, I had a discussion with a patient at my office who firmly believed that her daughter could "catch a cold" from going outside with wet hair or get an ear infection from exposing her ears to cold wind. This is absolutely not true! It is an old tale; similar to the theory that a couple weeks of bed rest is the best treatment for low back pain. Don't believe me? Well, believe it or not, a study has actually been done to prove it. I wonder where they got the suckers from to volunteer for this study. Anyway, in 1958, H.F. Dowling, and his friends wrote a paper in the American Journal of Hygiene, (Vol. 68, pp. 659-65): "Transmission of the Common Cold to Volunteers Under Controlled Conditions". More than 400 volunteers were exposed to viruses that cause colds. Some were exposed to very cold temperatures, some to 60-degree temperatures, and some to a very warm 80 degrees. Guess what, they all had the same rate of infection. This shows that the crucial factor that determines whether if you get a cold is not the outside temperature, it is in fact whether or not you are exposed to the virus that causes the cold.

Most colds are caused by rhinoviruses, literally meaning, "nose viruses." There are well over 100 known varieties of rhinoviruses and these viruses are in a constant state of change (mutation). The wide variety and the frequent mutation of these viruses are the reasons there is no cure or vaccine for colds.

Colds are self-limiting. This means that no matter what you do a cold will last for a week to 10 days. The hundreds of over-the-counter cold remedies, vitamin C, zinc, and your mom's chicken soup may help with the symptoms but they're no cure. The key in dealing with colds is not treatments or cure but prevention.

Colds are transmitted from person to person by direct contact with infected surfaces, breathing in infected droplets from a sneeze or cough, or from kissing an infected person. It's been recently found that direct contact, hand to face, is the main mode of virus transmission. This means touching infected surfaces or shaking hand with an infected person transmits the virus to your hand. Then when you touch your face, especially the lining of the nose, you introduce the virus into your body. This is by far the most common way people catch a cold. This is also why proper and frequent hand washing is the best way to protect yourself from catching a cold.

