

EVERYDAY LIFE

COMMON COLD

Age: Teenager/Adult

Level: Intermediate (B1)

Time: 30 minutes +

Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. discuss how to prevent and fight a cold;
2. read the facts about a common cold.

Language focus: health, illness, remedies

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student



that students understand the difference between 'get a cold' (become ill) and 'have a cold' (be ill). When they have finished their discussion, ask each pair to report their partner's answers to the class.

Next, ask students to do the quiz in Exercise 3. Explain that a red herring is an idiomatic expression meaning *something that is not relevant that makes you confused or takes your attention away from what you should be concentrating on*, or in this exercise an answer that is incorrect. Tell them they should tick the correct answers and put a cross next to the red herrings.

Tell students that they can check their answers by reading 'The common cold fact file' in Exercise 4. Make sure to check their understanding of any new language (e.g. *vaccine, bristles, door handle*), then highlight and practice any fixed phrases in the text that might be useful (*contrary to what most people think...*).

Key (red herrings):

1. Chocolate
2. Having regular cold showers
3. A glass of milk; garlic; a cheeseburger with large fries
4. Using a cloth handkerchief to blow your nose; going to bed and sleeping a lot; going for a long hard run wearing only shorts and a T-shirt

PROCEDURE

Begin the class by announcing to the students that you are ill (you might want to pretend to cough and blow your nose for dramatic effect!). Elicit the question 'What's wrong?' from the students and tell them that you have a cold. Ask them to work in pairs for two minutes and make a note of any symptoms that people get when they are getting a cold.

After the two minutes are up, conduct a quick whole class feedback and write up any symptoms on the board, making sure to elicit spelling and pronunciation where possible. Then hand out the worksheet and ask the students to do Exercise 1.

Key:

1. cough
2. runny nose
3. sore throat
4. sneezing



TEACHING TIP: When you teach a tricky vowel + consonant cluster like *ough* in the word *cough*, if you have time in class it's worth taking the opportunity to highlight the different sounds that the cluster can produce. You could draw the table below and see if students can add any other words with the same spelling and sound:

o = snow	oo = blue	ow = cow	uff = cuff	off = toff
though	through	plough	rough	cough

When students have finished Exercise 1, check the answers as a class. Next, ask them to look at Exercise 2 and monitor while they discuss the questions in pairs. Make a note of any interesting answers that you hear or any errors that you can correct later in class. Make sure

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WORKSHEET

EXERCISE 1: COLD SYMPTOMS

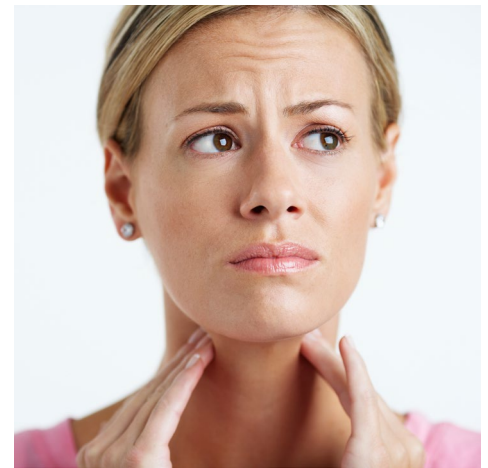
Complete the words in the box to make symptoms of a common cold, then match the symptom to the picture below.

1. c ____ h

2. r ____ y n ____

3. s ____ t ____

4. s ____



EXERCISE 2: CATCHING COLDS

Discuss the following questions with your partner:

1. How often do you get colds?
2. When was the last time you had one?
3. Can we do anything to avoid getting a cold?
4. What do you do when you have a cold?
5. Do you know any cold remedies?

EXERCISE 3: COLDS QUIZ

To test your knowledge and (we hope) find out a thing or two you didn't know about the common cold, try this quiz. In each section there is at least one red herring – something that will not help you avoid or fight a cold. Put a tick next to the correct advice and put a cross next to the red herrings.

1. Eating to avoid colds

It's cold season. There's a cold going round and some of the people around you already have one. What should you eat if you want to avoid getting one too?

- Plenty of oranges and other fruit that is rich in vitamin C
- Chocolate
- Food like carrots, spinach, eggs and liver that is rich in vitamin A

2. Preventative action

If someone with a cold sneezes on a bus, everyone on the bus is exposed to the cold virus. So what can you do to avoid a cold? You could lock yourself at home and refuse to open the door to anybody. Or you could ...

- Have regular cold showers
- Wash your hands regularly
- Relax – take things easy
- Have regular saunas

3. Cold remedies

It's too late now for preventative action. You've got a cold and you feel dreadful. Everyone you know has suggested a cold remedy. But which ones actually work?

- A glass of alcohol a day
- Eucalyptus and menthol drops
- A glass of milk
- A cheeseburger with large fries
- Hot, spicy Indian or Mexican food
- Garlic
- A hot bowl of soup
- A hot drink

4. Get well soon

You're probably miserable and feeling a little sorry for yourself. So what should you do to get over your cold and start to feel better?

- Use a cloth handkerchief to blow your nose
- Put your head over a bowl of hot water and inhale the steam
- Go to bed and get some more sleep
- Change your toothbrush
- Get some light exercise and fresh air
- Go for a long hard run wearing only shorts and a T-shirt



EXERCISE 4: FACT FILE

The common cold fact file

Eating to avoid colds

Many people eat more oranges to avoid getting a cold. Oranges are a good source of vitamin C, which boosts the immune system and so may help prevent colds. However, vitamin C has never been *proven* to prevent colds. What you really need to do is consume extra vitamin A, so eat more carrots, spinach, milk, eggs and liver. (Eating chocolate might make you feel happier, but it won't help you avoid a cold!)

Preventative action

The cold virus can live for up to two hours on door handles, towels, telephones, etc. If you touch these things

and then touch your eyes or nose, the cold virus will enter your body. So one of the best ways to prevent a cold is to wash your hands regularly. Another way to prevent a cold is to not worry and be happy. People under stress get more colds. A vaccination will give good protection against flu for a year, but there is no vaccine yet against the 250 viruses that cause the common cold. Regular saunas are also recommended. People in Sweden who have saunas twice a week have been shown to have fewer colds. (We could find no evidence to suggest that having regular cold showers will help prevent a cold!)

Cold remedies

When you have a cold, consuming hot foods and liquids will kill off the virus in your nose and mouth. That also includes hot, spicy food which contains chilli powder. Hot chicken soup is recommended. A glass of alcohol a day can also help to reduce inflammation in the mucus membranes. What you should not do is eat dairy products, because milk feeds the mucus in your nose. Drops of eucalyptus or menthol will also help. Some traditional cold remedies do not work. Garlic has many health benefits but doesn't give protection against a cold. Extra vitamin C won't help you either. (And while a cheeseburger with large fries might be your idea of food heaven, it won't cure your cold!)

Get well soon

If you want to recover from a cold quickly, you should not use a cloth handkerchief, because it is a perfect place for germs to breed. A good thing to do is to inhale steam by putting your head over a bowl of hot water with a towel over your head for about 15 minutes a day. The cold virus is very sensitive to high temperatures, and the steam will help kill the virus. And contrary to what most people think, going to bed and sleeping a lot is not a good idea. Light exercise and fresh air are much better ways to fight a cold. Also, you should not continue to use the same toothbrush when the worst of your cold is over, because germs survive between the bristles. Change your toothbrush when you start to feel better. (We could not find anyone to recommend going for a long hard run wearing only shorts and a T-shirt!)