



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center

INSTRUCTION SHEET: VIRAL INFECTION

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a viral infection. Your illness is likely caused by a tiny germ called a virus.

Fortunately, viral infections are generally less serious than bacterial infections. Unfortunately, viral infections can make you feel miserable, and few medicines are effective against viruses (most antibiotics work against bacteria). The symptoms of viral infections can be treated, but the infection itself must generally be overcome by your own body's defense mechanisms.

Symptoms of viral infection include fatigue (tired feeling), body aches, fever, chills, and loss of appetite; nausea, headache, scratchy throat, sinus congestion, and cough can also occur. Symptoms depend on which virus is causing the infection (more than a hundred viruses cause infections in humans).

The differentiation between a viral and bacterial infection is not 100 per cent. Also, a viral infection can become serious. At present, you appear to have a non-serious viral infection. **Remember, though, if your symptoms change or worsen, you should be examined again.**

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR VIRAL INFECTION:

1. Rest at home.
2. Drink plenty of liquids. Any non-alcoholic drink is fine. Do not force solid food, especially if you are nauseated.
3. Over-the-counter medicines can help treat specific symptoms. Acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen, or naproxen are effective for aches and fever. Decongestants can relieve sinus congestion. Cough medicines containing dextromethorphan (DM) are helpful for cough.
4. If your symptoms or overall condition worsen, seek medical care *promptly*. Return to the Student Health Center, see your personal/doctor, or go to the nearest Emergency Department without delay.
5. If you have concerns about ongoing mild symptoms, return to the Student Health Center or make a follow-up appointment with your personal/referral doctor. Your provider can help you control symptoms and monitor your progress.