The common cold is a self-limited clinical syndrome in which nasal catarrh is the predominant feature. Fever or other constitutional symptoms are absent. Complications are rare, but sinusitis, pharyngitis, and lower respiratory tract infections may follow. It is the most common infectious disease of humans and is also the most costly, for it is the leading cause of absenteeism from school and work.
There is no specific treatment for the common cold. Supportive measures are aimed at reducing the discomfort of the patient during the acute stage of the illness. Bacterial complications of significance are in-

lower respiratory tract may lead to a lipid pneumonia, particularly in the very young and the very old. A liberal intake of liquids, such as fruit juices, tea, or soft drinks, may be helpful. There is no proof of any curative value from the many proprietary remedies containing vitamins (including vitamin C), bioflavinoids, multiple analgesics, or antihistaminics in the treatment of the common cold. While the use of such remedies is of no benefit, the patient is exposed to agents with significant potential for engendering hypersensitivity. Throat lozenges without antimicrobics may help to relieve pharyngeal discomfort. If cough is nonproductive and is bothersome, a cough syrup such as elixir of terpin hydrate, with or without codeine, may be administered. In most cases, the acute symptoms usually last 1 to 2 days, and the patient is completely well in a week. If fever intervenes and symptoms persist, a careful physical examination must be carried out with particular attention given to auscultation of the lungs. A chest roentgenogram should be obtained because of the possibility of pneumonia.
JOURNALS

Infectious Diseases

A Modern Treatise of Infectious Processes

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