
SECTION B. UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

39. THE COMMON COLD

JACK M. GWALTNEY, JR.

TREATMENT

Only symptomatic treatment is available for the uncomplicated common cold.⁵⁴ Individual measures directed at controlling

Antibiotics have no place in the treatment of uncomplicated colds. Until truly effective and specific treatment becomes available, there will continue to be fads in the use of unproven cold remedies. The ingestion of large doses of vitamin C has been widely used as a preventive or therapeutic measure for colds. In some instances, controlled studies have shown a modest beneficial effect of vitamin C for colds. However, a careful analysis of the studies had indicated that a placebo effect could not be ruled out. In one study, many participants correctly surmised from the taste of the contents of the capsules used whether they

were receiving vitamin C or a placebo.⁶¹ In volunteers experimentally infected with rhinovirus, vitamin C in doses of 3 g/day was not effective in preventing infection and illness.^{62,63}

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