

# Colds

It's that time of year again: overheated rooms, unfriendly weather and people all around **coughing** and **sneezing**. And with over 200 cold-virus types, even the most intact immune system can be challenged.

**T**he common cold is as individual as the person afflicted with it, making it difficult to treat. Because of the **ever-increasing range** of OTC products on offer to deal with the symptoms, PTAs need to use all their know-how in advising customers who have been infected. From the **outset** it should be remembered that there are differences between colds and flu, the **former** is suited for self-treatment, the **latter**, especially because it may be **accompanied by** more serious symptoms, should be **referred to a GP**. There are so many **precautions** that can be taken

during this unhealthy season. The simplest things such as sneezing into the **crook of the arm** and correct hand-washing prevent the **spread** of viruses.

**Pharmacy customer: Good morning. I think I'm coming down with a cold.**

PTA: Most of the people who have come to us over the past weeks have the same problem. May I ask what your symptoms are?

**Well, I'm a bit hoarse, my voice is a bit scratchy and my nose is a little tingly and itchy.**

Do you have a headache? Or is your temperature raised? Quite a few people have the flu at the moment.

**I do have a headache but I don't have a temperature.**

What about coughing? You said that you are a bit hoarse.

**Yes, I cough occasionally.**

Is your cough productive?

**No, but it's very dry and irritating, sort of tickly, especially if I have to talk too much.**

Do you have **trouble swallowing**?

**Yes, but not much.**

Okay. So I can recommend these **throat lozenges**, you can **suck** one as slowly as possible every 4 hours and not more than 4 lozenges a day.

**I know them from home.**

Drinking plenty of **fluids** such as mineral water and tea is very important.

We also have this really excellent **throat spray**. Do you have any allergies or take medication regularly?

**I have bronchial asthma.**

Let me just check the contents ... aha, it contains menthol. No, so we can't give you that.

**What else can you recommend?**

Paracetamol for your headache but sometimes asthmatics react to it.

**That's okay I don't normally have any problems.**

Eating fresh fruit and vegetables as well as getting lots of fresh air help to reduce the spread of the cold. And hand-washing!

**Hand-washing! Why? I wash my hands a few times a day.**

How long do you wash them: 10 or maybe 20 seconds?

**If I'm really honest, I believe about 10 seconds is usual!**

Unfortunately, that's not enough. 30 seconds with soap and washing in between your fingers are thought to be sufficient.

**30 seconds!**

Hand-washing is one of the first steps in stopping the spread of infection. Another is avoiding handshakes.

**I see. Thank you for your help.**

**Goodbye.**

Bye! ■

*Catherine Croghan,  
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

## VOCABULARY

coughing	husten
sneezing	niesen
ever-increasing	ständig zunehmend, ständig steigende
range	Auswahl
outset	Anfang
former ... latter	erstgenannt ... letztgenannt
accompanied by	begleitet von
referred to a GP	an einen Arzt verwiesen
precautions	Vorsichtsmaßnahmen
crook of the arm	Armbeuge
spread	Verbreitung
coming down	(ugs.) eine Erkältung
with a cold	ausbrühen
hoarse	heiser
scratchy	kratzig
tingly and itchy	kribbelnd und juckend
have a	
temperature	(Idiom) Fieber haben
tickly	kitzelnd
throat lozenges	Lutschtabletten
suck	lutschen
fluids	Flüssigkeiten
throat spray	Halsspray
avoiding	vermeiden