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**FACULTY OF NURSING**

# **UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTION**

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## Definition

upper respiratory infection: An infection of the upper part of the respiratory system which is above the lungs. An upper respiratory infection can be due to any number of viral or bacterial infections. These infections may affect the throat (pharyngitis), nasopharynx (nasopharyngitis), sinuses (sinusitis), larynx (laryngitis), trachea (tracheitis) or bronchi (bronchitis). Upper respiratory infection is commonly abbreviated URI.

# Causes

## Viruses

- Rhinovirus
- Adenovirus
- Para influenza virus
- human metapneumovirus

# Bacteria

- group A beta-hemolytic streptococci
- group C beta-hemolytic streptococci
- *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* (diphtheria)
- *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (gonorrhea)
- *Chlamydia pneumoniae* (chlamydia)

## Types

The types of URIs refer to the parts of the upper respiratory tract most involved in the infection. In addition to the common cold, there are other types of URIs:

### Sinusitis

- Sinusitis is inflammation of the sinuses.

### Laryngitis

- Laryngitis is inflammation of the larynx or voice box.

## Epiglottitis

- Epiglottitis is inflammation of the epiglottis, the upper part of your trachea. It protects the airway from foreign particles that could get into the lungs. Swelling of the epiglottis is dangerous because it can block the flow of air into the trachea.

## Bronchitis

- Inflammation of the bronchial tubes is bronchitis.  
The right and left bronchial tubes branch off from the trachea and go to the right and left lungs.



# Symptoms

- A runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Sneezing,
- Cough
- Mucus production
- Fever
- Fatigue

- Headache
- Pain during swallowing
- Wheezing

# Diagnostic Evaluation

- History collection
- Physical examination
- **Throat swab:** Rapid antigen detection can be used to diagnose group A beta-hemolytic strep quickly.

- **Lateral neck X-rays:** This test may be ordered to rule out epiglottitis if you have difficulty breathing.
- **Chest X-ray:** Your doctor may order this test if they suspect pneumonia.
- **CT scans:** This test may be used to diagnose sinusitis.

# Treatment

- **Steam inhalation** and **gargling** with salt water are a safe way to get relief from URI symptoms.
- **Analgesics** like **acetaminophen** and **NSAIDs** can help reduce fever, aches, and pains.
- Cough suppressants,
- Vitamin C,
- Zinc,

# Prevention

- Do frequent hand washing
- Avoid being in close contact with people who are sick.
- Wipe down objects such as remote controls, phones, and doorknobs that may be touched by people in the house who have a URI.
- Cover your mouth and nose if you're the one who's sick.
- Stay home if you're sick.

**THANK YOU**