

## The Cold and Flu season is upon us:

### Tips to protect your staff on-board ship

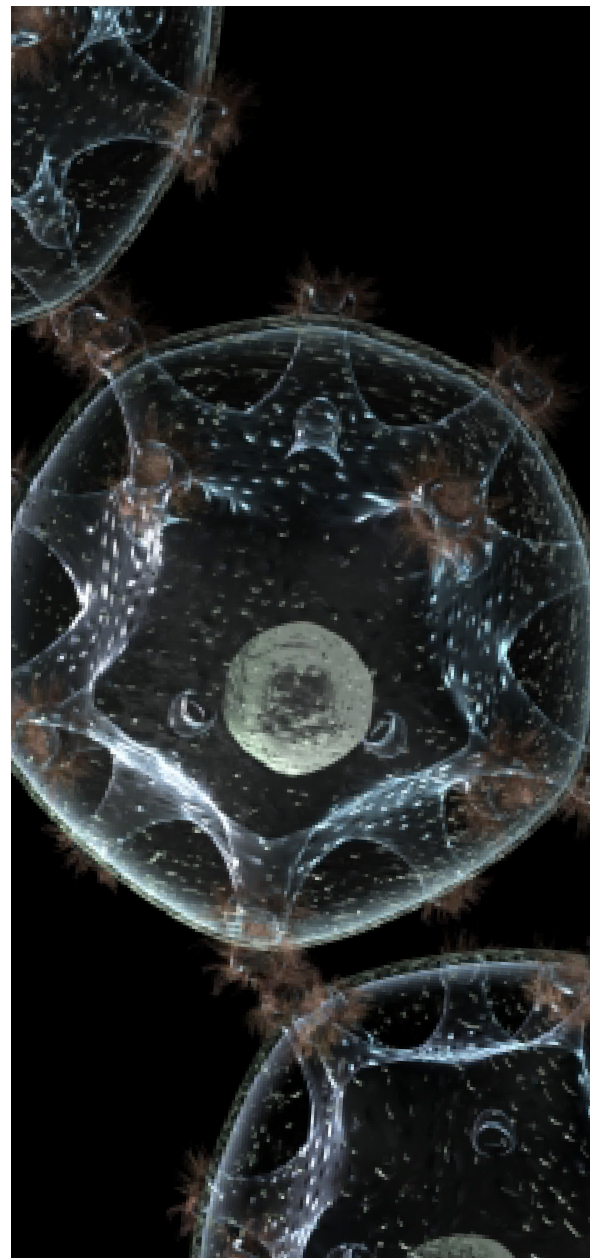
If your ships travel above the equator, the cold and flu season typically happens during the colder winter months, usually from later October to March. If you are south of the equator it flips just like the seasons.

### So what causes the common cold?

The common cold and flu (influenza) are infections of the upper respiratory tract (nose, throat, ears and sinuses) which are caused by the cold and flu viruses. The infections are contagious, passed on by tiny droplets in the air and hand contact.

There are hundreds of different types of virus that can cause a cold, which explains why children get them repeatedly.

Flu is the result of the influenza virus, which is constantly changing its structure, so new strains appear each year. We don't have immunity to the new strains, which is why we can catch flu repeatedly.



### How are colds and flu treated?

Most colds don't last long and need no specific treatment other than painkillers and simple measures such as decongestant rubs or vaporisers. Antibiotics are of no benefit. Zinc supplements may help to settle a cold more quickly.

### Other useful measures

Air conditioning is a major cause of spreading any virus, many viruses thrive and multiply inside air conditioning systems. Regular disinfection will help reduce the number of cases.



Carry a good supply of proprietary treatments for coughs, sore throats and pain but remember to check the side effects! Many preparations cause drowsiness and should not be used by any crew operating machinery (particularly in the wheelhouse). Some preparations such as Night Nurse liquid have a high concentration of alcohol, there have been many cases of people failing breathalyzer tests because they were unaware of this.

Do not believe the old wives tales about feeding fevers or starving colds, when you have a bad cold you may not feel like eating but you should make an effort.

### Who's affected?

Anyone can catch a cold or flu. The peak season for colds is the colder winter months, not only because of the weather but because heating dries out the normally moist nasal mucosa - an important defense against invading viruses.

However, you can catch a cold at any time of the year; one particular type of cold virus thrives in the summer. Flu rarely occurs outside November to February in the Europe.

### What are the symptoms?

A cold causes a stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough, mild fever and tiredness, lasting two to four days.

Flu is more severe with a high fever (usually 39°C or above), chills, headache, intense muscle pains, exhaustion, loss of appetite, cough and sometimes a blocked nose and sore throat. It may last a week or more and possible complications include pneumonia.

### About Hutton's Medical

Hutton's Medical is one of the world's leading companies specialising in developing and supplying a wide range of pharmaceutical and medical supplies to the shipping and offshore industries.

Ensuring a ship's medical requirements and supplies are always up to date is a necessary and legal obligation for the well being of those on-board and the denial of essential medical treatment can have very serious legal implications.

Staff at Hutton's Medical are fully conversant with the latest marine medical legislation and can provide an inspection, stock replenishment and certification service of a ship's medical locker anywhere in the world to ensure that customers' legal requirements are always maintained.

This service is available 24hrs a day, 7 days a week from a team of highly professional, experienced and fully qualified staff offering product supply and full after sales support and advice.

Hutton's Medical holds appropriate Home Office and Wholesale Dealer licenses.

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