Pharmacists Offer Recommendations to Guide Public Through Cold and Flu Season

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 18, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The American Pharmacists Association would like to remind the public about the importance of speaking with their pharmacist during cold and flu season. A pharmacist can help patients with such things as getting a flu shot, identifying the differences between a common cold and the flu, suggesting the best over-the-counter medications and offering a recommendation when a health care provider should be seen.

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The common cold and influenza are two of the most easily transmittable diseases in the United States. Although the common cold is usually mild, with symptoms lasting one to two weeks, it is a leading cause of doctor visits and missed days from school and work. Typically, children suffer from five to seven colds each year and adults from two to three. According to the CDC, on average 5% to 20% of the U.S. population becomes ill with influenza, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized and more than 24,000 people die from seasonal flu-related complications.

Knowing whether you have the common cold or the flu can be complicated, and the common symptoms are sometimes indistinguishable:Common ColdThe Flu Sneezing Fever and/or chills
Stuffy or Runny Nose Stuffy or Runny Nose
Sore Throat Sore Throat
Cough Cough
Watery Eyes Fatigue
Mild Head or Body Aches Pronounced Head or Body Aches
Vomiting/Diarrhea (more common in children than adults) A pharmacist can discuss your symptoms with you a
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