Soldier Health Maintenance Manual

USACHPPM
Readiness thru Health

TG 272
Self Care
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U.S. Army Center for Health
Promotion & Preventive Medicine
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Get medical help right away if you have any of the following symptoms.*

- Allergic reaction to an insect bite, chemicals, etc.
- Any eye injury.
- Any human or animal bite that breaks the skin.
- Any symptom that starts after getting hit in the head.
- Bleeding that can't be stopped.
- Blood in your stool or black, tar-like stools.
- Blood in your urine.
- Burns, including severe sunburn.
- Coughing up blood.
- Feeling very hot and confused after you've been out in the heat.
- Difficulty breathing or the feeling of choking.
- Difficulty speaking, swallowing, or opening your mouth.
- Shortness of breath or wheezing while resting.
- Tightness, pressure, or pain in your chest that spreads to your neck, jaw, arm, or back.
- Stiff neck with fever.
- Sudden loss of vision.
- Very bad pain anywhere on your body.
- Vomiting up blood or what looks like coffee grounds.
- Weakness and dizziness.
- You feel like you might hurt yourself or others.
- You have been out in the cold and think you may have a cold injury.

*This list does not include all conditions that may require emergency medical care.

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Introduction

You are a soldier. You serve your country in the U.S. Army, the finest fighting force in the world. You make it that way. No one else can do your job with your pride, your discipline, and your courage.

You are the most valuable asset of the U.S. Army. Your health is important because you will do your best when you feel your best. You are responsible for your health. The Army wants you to have the tools and skills you need to take care of your own health.

Don't Take Chances with Your Health – If In Doubt, Get Medical Help
Remember: Self-care is only for minor health problems. If you are sick or hurt, see a health care provider. If you are very sick or badly hurt, call 911. Don't risk your health.

What is Self-care?
Self-care means taking care of your health when you can and using the military health care system when you need to. Self-care helps you stay healthy so that you can do your job and carry out your mission. You will do your best when you are taking care of yourself. The Self-care Program is a tool to help you take care of yourself.

Self-care can include any or all of the following:
- Improving and maintaining your health.
- Preventing illness.
- Evaluating health symptoms.
- Using self-care measures.
- Visiting a health care provider.

You make self-care decisions when you:
- Wash your hands to keep from spreading a cold to others.
- Choose what foods to eat.
- Decide for or against risky behaviors like smoking.
- Decide whether or not a health symptom needs medical attention.

What is a Health Symptom?
This Soldier Health Maintenance Manual tells you how to take care of yourself while in the Army. Use this manual to help you decide what to do about health symptoms. A symptom is a negative change in your health. Some examples of health symptoms are:

- Blister
- Sore throat
- Skin rash
- Constipation

You can prevent most health symptoms by taking care of yourself. Other symptoms will go away with proper treatment. Treatments can be as simple as wearing proper footwear to prevent blisters or gargling with salt water for a sore throat. Treatments can also include medicines you get at a pharmacy without a prescription (called "over-the-counter" medications). Other symptoms require that you see a health care provider. Use the symptom evaluation charts in this book to help you decide what to do when you have a health symptom. If you are not sure what to do or can't find a chart for your problem, go to Sick Call.

Self-care and Medicines
An important part of self-care is the use of approved medicines. To get the most benefit from any medicine, you must follow the instructions on how to use it. For more information on medications, see the Over-the-Counter Medication Guidelines in Appendix A of this booklet. Ask a health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about any kind of medicine.

Be aware that soldiers have had serious reactions from dietary supplements, herbal-type medications, and performance-enhancing drugs. You should be an informed consumer before using any of these types of products. If you have any questions, ask a health care provider or pharmacist.

Part 1 - Staying Healthy

Good Health Basics

Protecting Yourself

Wellness for Soldiers

Good Health Basics

Dental Health

To keep an attractive smile, you must brush and floss your teeth regularly. Here are some brushing tips:

- Use a soft bristle toothbrush and toothpaste with fluoride.
- Brush at least twice a day – in the morning and at night right before going to bed.
- Don't scrub when brushing – use a gentle circular motion to remove the daily build-up of plaque.
- It takes about 2 minutes to thoroughly brush all your teeth.
- Brushing your tongue will help keep your breath fresh.

The job of cleaning your teeth is not complete without flossing at least once a day. A toothbrush does not get in between your teeth – floss does. Flossing helps prevent cavities between the teeth as well as gum disease. Most people find waxed dental floss easier to use.

To floss your teeth:

1. Start with 18 inches of floss.
2. Starting at one end of the floss, wrap it around the index fingers of both hands.
3. Holding the floss between the index finger and thumb of both hands, gently slide the floss between the teeth.
4. Use a different area of the floss each time you floss different teeth.

Finally, it is important to have regular dental exams. It is better to get a small problem fixed than to let a cavity or infection get really bad and cause needless pain. During your annual check-up, be sure to ask the dentist if you need a cleaning. A professional cleaning will remove tartar that builds up.

Remember, you don't have to clean all your teeth – just the ones you want to keep!

Food and Nutrition

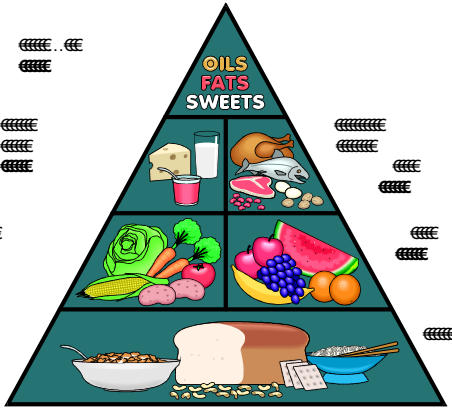
One of the most important things you can do for your health is to eat a balanced diet high in nutrition. Eating right:

- Helps you perform at your top level.
- Gives you energy.
- Gives you endurance.
- Helps you concentrate and think clearly.
- Helps you stay confident and motivated.

Not eating right can make you feel tired or light-headed, cause weight problems, and prevent you from doing your best.

Food Pyramid – Your Guide to a Well-Balanced Diet

A healthy diet is one that has the right kinds of foods in the right amounts. A good guide to follow is the Food Pyramid. In the pyramid, foods you should eat more often are at the base, and those you should eat less often are at the top. Note that the serving sizes in the pyramid aren't very big.



Foods that give you energy like cereal, rice, and pasta are at the base of the pyramid. Recommended daily servings: 6 to 11.
Bread serving: 1 slice of bread, ½-cup cooked rice or pasta, or 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal.

The next level of the pyramid contains fruits and vegetables. These foods also give you energy and contain vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
Recommended daily servings for vegetables: 3 to 5.
Vegetable serving: 1 cup raw leafy greens, ¾-cup vegetable juice, or ½-cup of chopped vegetables.
Recommended daily servings for fruit: 2 to 4.
Fruit serving: 1 medium apple, banana, or orange, ½-cup of chopped fruit, or ¾-cup fruit juice.

The third level contains the protein foods that help build and repair muscles. Protein is also a back-up energy source. Recommended daily servings: 2 to 3.
Milk serving: 1 cup of milk or yogurt, or 1- ½ ounces of cheese.
Meat serving: 2 to 3 ounces of cooked lean meat (about the size of a deck of cards), one egg, or two tablespoons of seeds or nuts.

The top of the pyramid shows the things you shouldn't eat very much – fats, oils, and sweets. These are things like butter and margarine, mayonnaise, fried foods, baked goods like cookies, cakes and pies, ice cream, candy, and soft drinks with sugar.

Bottom Line for a Healthy Diet: Your plate should be mostly filled with rice, pasta, potatoes, bread, or cereal, along with fruits and vegetables. If meat covers most of your plate, take another look at the Food Pyramid.

Nutrition in the Field
Eating right during combat or field operations is needed to support the mental and physical work you must do. When you are in the field, you could be using even more energy than a major league ball player. Good nutrition can mean the difference between top performance and mission failure.

Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) give you the most nutrition in the smallest package. They are made with real food. Some parts of your MREs have extra nutrients. That means when you eat at least a part of all components of your MREs, you are getting a well-balanced diet.

If you can't or don't want to eat all of the food in the MREs, do the following:

- Eat a part of each component to get a good balance of nutrients.
- Eat the bread/cereal/pasta/rice part first for energy.
- Save unopened dry snack items to eat when you're on the move.

Other Tips for the Field

- Don't use field exercises as an excuse to lose weight.
- Try to eat at least three times a day to keep your energy up.
- Eat whenever you can, even if you don't feel like it. Think of nutrition as an important part of the mission.
- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids. See the **Hydration** section (page 27) in this manual for more information.

Mental and Emotional Fitness

Mental and emotional fitness are very important to your total health. While some people seem to go through life without a worry, the rest of us must learn skills to cope with life's hard times.

Everyone must deal with stress. As a soldier, you have stresses that your civilian friends don't have. Moves to unfamiliar places, frequent separation from family and friends, and deployments add unique challenges to the usual stress of life.

The Army has many resources to help you stay mentally healthy. Most soldiers need help at some point. Some think that asking for help is a sign of weakness, but that is NOT true – it is a sign of strength. The Army has many people and services to help you cope with the stresses of life including:

- Commanders
- Counselors, including alcohol and drug counselors
- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Chaplains and spiritual advisors
- Community health nurses
- Drill instructors/cadre
- Doctors and health care providers
- Army Community Services

The Army also offers classes to help you learn skills to cope with difficult times. Most posts offer classes in stress management, anger management, money management, conflict management, and parenting and family life skills. These are provided at no cost to you or your spouse.

Warning Signs

Sometimes you or your buddy may need help and not even realize it. Sometimes your buddy may need to change his or her behavior. It is very important to watch out for and take care of each other. This may include talking straight with your buddy or reporting it to your chain of command. Your buddy may not like it, but if you do it kindly, firmly, and because you care, things will work out.

Some warning signs of too much stress or anger are:

- Not being able to sleep or wanting to sleep all the time.
- Eating too little or too much.
- Trouble making friends.
- Problems concentrating at work or home.
- "Snapping" at people.
- Crying.
- Frequent headaches, upset stomach, or diarrhea.
- Feeling worried all the time.
- Feeling confused or "foggy".
- Feeling numb or distant.
- Arguments with friends or family.
- Not doing your best at work.
- Drinking too much.
- Smoking too much.
- Spending money you don't have.
- Feeling tired or weak all the time.
- Feeling guilty.
- Losing interest in activities – even fun ones.
- Having thoughts of hurting yourself or others.

These are just some of the warning signs. If you or a buddy is having a problem coping with life, see the **Depression, Stress,** or **Anxiety** symptom evaluation chart (page 81) in this manual. Denying a problem with depression, stress, or anxiety won't make it go away. Seek help – it may save your life or the life of someone you care about.

Physical Fitness, Activity, and Readiness

Physical fitness is a very important part of your health. Not only does your level of physical fitness have a direct impact on your combat readiness, physically fit soldiers are much less likely to get physical injuries and more likely to have enjoyable, productive lives.

At a minimum, soldiers must meet Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) standards by the end of AIT (which is a reasonable goal.) Your unit-training program is designed to help you reach that goal. After AIT, you should continue a program of regular vigorous exercise that balances strength, mobility, and endurance and allows for proper rest and recovery.

Your Exercise Program Should:

Be Progressive – Your exercise session must be gradually increased to safely and effectively improve your physical performance. Remember, there are many times throughout life that you may have to modify your training and begin slowly again, like after an illness, when recovering from an injury, returning from deployment or the field, moving to a new unit, etc.

Be Regular – Regular exercise sessions (3-5 times per week) improve performance and reduce your chances of the “Weekend Warrior Syndrome” (getting a sports injury on the weekends because of little activity during the week).

Provide Overload – In order to improve you must gradually push yourself beyond the normal demands placed on your body.

Provide Variety – Spread the stress of exercise over the entire body by varying the types of exercises you do throughout the week. This also keeps you from getting bored and keeps your motivation up.

Allow Recovery – Your body is actually strengthened during periods of rest. Regular periods of rest between activities, sleep, and proper nutrition help the body rebuild itself. For example, a hard day of running should be followed by a day of resistance training to give the muscles you used during running some time to recover.

Be Balanced – Your exercise program should include **low-intensity endurance activities** (such as running, biking, swimming, or stair climbing), **high-intensity endurance activities** (such as sprints or intervals while running, cycling, swimming, or climbing), **muscular strength and endurance** (resistance exercises such as lifting weights or your own body weight), and **mobility training** (activities that develop agility, balance, coordination, flexibility, posture, stability, speed, and power such as agility drills, individual movement techniques, and stretching after activity). (See the following sample fitness schedule.)

Be Specific – The activities you perform during your exercise sessions should be specific to your goals.

Be Precise – Perform all muscle strength and mobility exercises slowly and with correct posture. The quality of your training may be more important than the quantity. For example, performing any activity sloppily or hurried is much less effective and may cause injury.

Warming Up (Preparing for Activity)

Before exercising or playing a sport, do a 3 to 5 minute warm-up that has the same movements as the exercise or sport. Start slowly then increase the pace. For example, if you are going for a run, you might start out by walking, increase the pace to a fast walk, break into a slow jog, and then slowly increase up to training speed. To get ready to play basketball, you can practice shooting, dribbling, and running sideways slowly at first, then more actively. (Note: Specific stretching is not required during warm-up if adequate active preparation is carried out.)

Performing Activity

To improve your low-intensity endurance, you should exercise for 20 to 30 minutes at a moderate pace without stopping 2 or 3 times per week. You should be working hard enough that you can talk but you can't sing. To improve your high-intensity endurance, do running, cycling, swimming, or climbing sprints (intervals) for 30 seconds and rest for 90 seconds (gradually increase repetitions from 5 to 10, then decrease your rest time to 60 seconds) once or twice a week. Improve your muscular strength and endurance by performing 2 or 3 sets of 3 – 12 repetitions (less

repetitions for strength, more repetitions for endurance) to temporary muscle failure 2 or 3 times a week. Improve your mobility by performing agility drills once or twice a week. (See the U.S. Army's Physical Fitness School's website at http://www-benning.army.mil/usapfs for more information).

Cooling Down (Recovering from Activity)
Always cool down after every exercise session. A cool-down is basically the reverse of a warm-up and gives your heart rate a chance to come down to a normal level. Cooling down also helps reduce muscle stiffness. Stretches to improve flexibility during cool-down should be held for at least 30 seconds.

Sample Fitness Schedule

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
One	Strength	High-Intensity Endurance Mobility	Strength	Low-Intensity Endurance	Strength
Two	Low-Intensity Endurance	Strength	High-Intensity Endurance Mobility	Strength	Low-Intensity Endurance
Three	Strength	Low-Intensity Endurance	Strength	High-Intensity Endurance Mobility	Strength
Four	High-Intensity Endurance Mobility	Strength	Low-Intensity Endurance	Strength	High-Intensity Endurance Mobility

This four-week schedule repeats.

Relationship Fitness

You have relationships that include your friends and buddies, your parents and family, and others. Relationships must be grown, and this takes time and effort. In general, the more time and effort you put into a relationship, the more it grows. Soldiers have to work extra hard to maintain and grow relationships because they are often apart from their loved ones. Letters and cards, regular phone calls, and e-mail are all good ways to keep your relationships going. This is especially important if you are married or have children.

Relationship fitness is important to your total health. Good relationships can make the good times better and the bad times bearable. Likewise, a bad relationship can hurt your mental, emotional, and even your physical health. If you are in a relationship and find yourself fighting or ignoring each other a lot, then you should seek help. The Army has people who can help you with relationship problems. These people include:

- Commanders, drill instructors/cadre, and chain of command
- Counselors, including alcohol and drug counselors
- Social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists
- Chaplains and spiritual advisors
- Community health nurses
- Army Community Services

The Army also offers classes to help you learn relationship skills to cope with difficult times. Most posts offer classes in relationship management, conflict management, and parenting and family life skills. These are provided at no cost to you or your spouse.

A Word About Marriage

Fifty percent of all marriages in the United States end in divorce. Getting married at a young age (under age 25) increases that risk even more. Just as it is important to wait until you are ready to have sex, it is important that you wait until you are ready for marriage.

Sleep

Sleep is needed for both your mental and physical health. Not getting enough sleep makes you forgetful, slows your reaction time, and makes you less alert. Different people need different amounts of sleep, but eight hours of sleep a night is the usual recommendation.

In order to get a restful night's sleep, use the following suggestions.

- Do not drink coffee, tea, cola, or other drinks with caffeine within 4 to 6 hours of bedtime.
- Do not use tobacco products before bed or during the night.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages within 4 to 6 hours of bedtime.

- While a light snack before bedtime can help you sleep, avoid large meals.
- Avoid strenuous exercise right before bed.
- Keep your sleeping area dark, quiet, and a little cool.

In The Field

There may be times when the mission or training doesn't let you get enough sleep. Get ready by sleeping as much as you can **before** the mission or training starts. Lack of sleep can hurt your performance. Help yourself with the following suggestions.

- Take short stretch breaks or exercise lightly in place.
- Write things down – don't trust your memory.
- Double-check your communications and calculations.
- Beware of "seeing things" when very tired. Before taking action, check strange observations.

Sun Safety

Why should you protect yourself from the sun?

Every spring and summer, soldiers get painful sunburns that lead to time lost from duty and training. Even in the winter, you can get a sunburn and "snow blindness." Also known as "welder's flash," snow blindness is a brief, painful swelling of the eyes.

If you have a fair complexion and light hair, you are especially at risk for skin damage from the sun. But the sun can also hurt your eyes, so even soldiers with dark complexions need to protect themselves.

How should you protect your skin?

Use sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or above. Reapply every few hours if you can. Don't forget to apply sunscreen to your lips. Once opened, sunscreen loses its strength over a year, so replace your sunscreen at least once a year. Get a waterproof sunscreen if you will be sweating a lot or will be around water.

To protect your skin you should also:

- Seek shade.
- Use your uniform to cover your arms and legs.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your head and neck.

How should you protect your eyes?
Wear sunglasses that have a special coating to protect your eyes from the sun's harmful UVA and UVB rays. Sunglasses do not have to be expensive to protect well. Wide-brimmed hats also help. Use goggles in snow-covered areas.

When should you protect yourself?
The sun is strongest between 1000 and 1600. Use the rule "Short Shadow? Seek Shade!" If your shadow is shorter than your height, you can get a light sunburn in about 35 minutes. But when your shadow is twice as long as your height, it would take about 90 minutes for you to get that same light sunburn.

For more information on sunburn, see the **Sunburn** symptom evaluation chart (page 79) in this manual.

Protecting Yourself

Alcohol Use

Alcohol abuse and alcoholism can lead to poor health and even death. Drinking too much can cause problems that affect everyone such as:

- Car accidents
- Physical injury
- Unwanted pregnancies
- Violence
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Crime

As a soldier, you should know that drinking too much alcohol can hurt your physical performance now and even more in the near future. Drinking too much can make it hard for you to perform your duties.

One of the simplest methods to assess your alcohol use is the **CAGE** test. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Have I made unsuccessful attempts to cut down on drinking? (**C**ut down)
2. Have I been criticized for drinking and become annoyed? (**A**nnoyed)
3. Have I felt guilt about drinking? (**G**uilt)
4. Have I used alcohol as an eye-opener in the morning. (**E**ye-opener)

If you answered “yes” to any one of these questions, alcohol may be a problem in your life. Recognize that alcohol use can easily develop into alcohol abuse and alcoholism and become a major health hazard and personal problem.

You can get help for alcohol abuse just like you can get help for any medical or health problem. Professional help, rehabilitation, treatment, and counseling are available to support you. For more information, talk to your commander, doctor, chaplain, or other health service provider as soon as possible.

General Safety

Staying safe means using common sense. To stay safe and avoid injury during training, you should:

- Avoid wrestling, fighting, horseplay, pushing, shoving, etc. at all times, both inside and outside of buildings.
- Do not run in buildings unless doing authorized and supervised training.
- Avoid using extension cords. They can become overloaded and start a fire.
- Do not burn candles, wax, or shoe polish. These are also fire risks.
- Because of the risk of fire, no items should be left plugged in when you are not around except clocks, floor lamps, desk lamps, TV/VCRs, computers, and vending machines.
- Use no more than two plugs per electrical socket. An overloaded electrical socket can start a fire.
- Do not tamper with any building smoke/fire detectors or fire extinguishers. Report any non-working detectors or extinguishers immediately.
- Know where the fire exit nearest your room is and how to get out of the building in case of fire.
- When running, stay aware of the traffic in front of you, behind you, and on both sides of the street.
- Do not run with headphones on at any time.
- If you run when it is dark outside, wear reflective clothing.
- When driving or riding in a motor vehicle, always wear a seat belt.
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, don't sleep in or near the exhaust of a vehicle with the engine running.

Hearing

Hearing loss caused by noise is:

- Permanent,
- Cannot be medically corrected, and
- Is the most common injury in the Army.

The key is to **prevent** hearing loss.

Protecting your hearing is a matter of personal well-being and quality of life. However, good hearing is also important to the accomplishment of the mission. Soldiers use their hearing for many things, including:

- Detecting movement through brush,
- Determining where gunfire is coming from, or
- Conducting radio communications.

A significant hearing loss could put your life and the lives of your unit in danger in a combat situation.

The fact that you "get used to the noise" you work around doesn't prevent the noise from damaging your hearing. In fact, it could be a warning sign that you are losing your hearing. A good rule of thumb is that if you have to shout in order to be heard over the noise, your hearing is in danger.

When working in "noise hazardous" areas, regular use of hearing protection is the only way to prevent hearing loss due to noise. Hearing protective devices in the Army include noise muffs, earplugs, ear canal caps, and protective helmets. In order for earplugs to be effective, they should be fitted by trained personnel and you should wear them correctly. Cotton or tissues are **not** hearing protectors!

Hearing protectors are free to soldiers. If you need hearing protection, ask the medical personnel in your unit.

Off-duty activities, such as listening to music at a high volume or using power tools in an enclosed area, also put your hearing at risk.

Remember: Hearing loss from noise cannot be corrected, only prevented. Wear your hearing protectors in noisy areas, on- or off-duty.

Injury Prevention

As a young, physically active person, most of the injuries you may get will be due to sports or exercise. Strains, sprains, and blisters are usually due to training errors such as exercising too long, too fast, too hard, too much, too soon, or without the proper equipment. The following are ways to reduce your chances of getting an injury.

Watch how long and how often you run

Research has shown that as running mileage goes up, so do physical injuries. During an exercise session, running longer than 30 minutes (3 times a week) will not do much to improve your fitness, but your chance of injury will more than double if you exercise up to 45 minutes. Also, running more than 3 times per week (for 30 minutes) only slightly improves your fitness while your chance of injury triples if you run 5 times per week. Running for 30 minutes 3 times a week may not be magic numbers but the costs of exceeding this guideline may outweigh the benefits.

However, as a soldier, you must have the endurance needed for combat. See page 9 for activities other than running that help improve endurance.

Use protective equipment

When playing a sport or exercising, use the recommended protective equipment such as bicycle helmets for bike riding, protective eyewear for racquet sports, and wrist guards and elbow pads for skating and skateboarding. Sports bras for women help decrease breast pain or discomfort during physical activity. If you have injured your ankle in the past, certain types of ankle braces may help prevent another injury to that ankle. See a doctor who can help you with this.

One of the most important pieces of protective equipment is properly-fitting running shoes — Replace your running shoes often.

Your running shoes give your feet, back, and legs protection when you run. The shock absorption and stability in most shoes is less effective after 400 to 600 miles of use – this is usually reached in 6 to 9 months. At the latest, replace your shoes when you see permanent crease marks in the midsole or when you have worn through the first bottom layer

(usually happens at the outside edge at the back of the shoe), **whichever comes first**. Also, replace your shoes if the upper part is so worn that you roll off the sole on one side or the other.

When buying running shoes, keep the following in mind:

- Buy shoes that are right for you. Take a look at the AAFES Fit Your Foot brochure and display in the PX or military clothing sales store.
- Buy *running* shoes for running and then only run in them.
- Before putting on a shoe, make sure it easily bends exactly where your toes bend.
- Try on shoes later in the day when your feet are their largest and wear the socks you usually run in.
- Both right and left shoes should be immediately comfortable (no "break-in" needed).
- Go to a non-carpeted surface and jog a little to see how both shoes feel.

Warm up (Prepare for Activity)

Before exercising or playing a sport, do a 3 to 5 minute warm-up that has the same movements as the exercise or sport. Start slowly then increase the pace. For example, if you are going for a run, you might start out by walking, increase the pace to a fast walk, break into a slow jog, and then slowly increase up to training speed. To get ready to play basketball, you can practice shooting, dribbling, running sideways slowly at first, then more actively.

Quit smoking and chewing tobacco

Smoking greatly increases your chance of getting a physical injury. Research shows that every cigarette you smoke increases your risk of injury.

Listen to your body

Understand the warning signs of an injury. Pay close attention to pain that develops slowly – a sign of a potential overuse injury. Most overuse injuries start out with a "pulling" feeling and progress to pain after the exercise. If not treated properly, this injury will start to cause pain during exercise then worsen to a point that you can no longer do certain activi-

ties. You can stop a small injury from growing into a larger one by paying attention to these early signs that something is wrong.

If you think you have a sports or exercise injury, see the **Joint Pain** (page 65), **Muscle Pain** (page 68), or **Foot Problems** (pages 61-64) symptom evaluation charts in this manual.

Sexual Responsibility

Being responsible about having sex is very important for your health and career. You can control when you have children. It is also important to avoid sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Sexually transmitted diseases can cause serious health problems and even death. STDs don't just "happen to the other guy" and not all STDs are curable. Many STDs, including AIDS, have few if any symptoms in the beginning.

Do you know how to protect yourself from unintended pregnancy and STDs? The best protection is to not have sexual intercourse of any kind (vaginal, oral, or anal). If you have sexual intercourse, the best protection is to use a long-term birth control method ***plus*** a male or female condom every time. Long-term birth control methods for women include the birth control pill, birth control shot, or inserts under the skin.

The kind of sexual behavior that leads to STDs also puts soldiers at risk for unintended pregnancy. An unintended pregnancy is one that was never wanted or that happens sooner than you want it. Over half of the births to active duty female soldiers are from unintended pregnancies. Most of those babies have military fathers as well, so this is **NOT** just a women's issue – it is a soldier's issue.

Unintended pregnancies can cause problems for you and your unit. If you have not planned to become a parent, you may not be prepared financially, and you may not be in a long-term relationship. Single mothers and their babies are at higher risk for illness and other difficulties. This can mean extra time away from work before and after the baby is born. Both men and women can wind up with child support expenses that aren't in their budgets.

An unintended pregnancy impacts mission. It is harder for your unit to deal with than a planned pregnancy because there isn't as much warning that the pregnant soldier will be missing work and not available for deployment. A planned pregnancy can avoid critical times like deployment and training cycles.

Substance Abuse Prevention

A fit soldier is free from the effects of substance abuse. Substance abuse is the use of any illegal drugs. Substance abuse is also the abuse of alcohol or the use of any prescription drug outside of what it was prescribed for. The Army does not tolerate the use of illegal drugs whatsoever. Prescription drugs must be used only by the person the drugs were prescribed for and only for the reason they were prescribed. Alcohol, while not illegal, is a substance that can be easily abused.

Substance abuse hurts your physical and mental health. Substance abuse also:

- Decreases combat readiness.
- Hurts mission completion.
- Affects safety in the workplace.
- Hurts relationships with family and friends.

You can get help for substance abuse just like you can get help for any medical or health problem. The Army has a substance abuse program. Rehabilitation services, counseling, and education programs are available to support you.

There is an identification program for substance users that is set up by your commander. Regular urine checks of your unit are made to see who might have a substance abuse problem. The best way to get help for a substance abuse problem is to tell your commander that you think you have a problem and need help. This is called "voluntary (self) identification."

How can you tell if you or someone you know has a substance abuse problem? The following are some signs to look for.

- A decline in work performance
- AWOL or tardiness
- Change in mood or attitude
- Job accidents or safety violations
- Family problems
- A decline in health or physical fitness
- Secretive about actions and possessions
- Increased borrowing of money from friends or family
- Stealing
- Unusual flare-ups of temper
- Staying out late

If you use drugs, use the following to rate your behavior:

- Do you find that your friends or spouse worry about or complain about your drug use?
- Do you feel you can get a little extra out of life by occasional drug use?
- Do you feel the need to escape, and use drugs to do it?
- Do you look forward to using drugs (or alcohol) after work?
- Do you use drugs because your friends do?
- Do you ever try to limit your drug use to certain times of the day or certain places?
- Do you ever feel bad about your drug use?
- Do you use drugs to control your weight or modify your moods without a prescription?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, seek help as soon as possible. Professional help, rehabilitation, treatment, and counseling are available. Getting help as soon as possible will help you enjoy other things for fun and relaxation such as off-duty sports, cultural events, education, or spiritual activities.

Remember: The best way to get help for a substance abuse problem is to tell your commander that you think you have a problem and need help.

Tobacco Use

Tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, and snuff are legal for use by adults. However, it is easy to get hooked on tobacco which can cause serious health problems like cancer and heart disease.

Tobacco use can also hurt your performance. Every cigarette you smoke increases your risk for injury. Smoking also reduces night vision.

If you are a tobacco user, the most important thing you can do for your health is to quit. As a soldier, you should know that the Army discourages tobacco use. Most Army posts have tobacco cessation programs. They offer classes to help you change your habits and medicine to help you quit. Continued tobacco use can cause health problems, and eventually, death.

Vision

Don't take your vision for granted. Take care of your eyes and your eyes will take care of you.

At Work

- Follow eye safety signs and procedures. Know what to do if a hazardous material splashes in your eye.
- Always wear approved eye protection for mechanical, chemical, biological, or radiant energy (such as welding, lasers, or sunlight) hazards. Make sure your eye protection is clean, in good shape, and has Z87 marked on the side. (Z87 means the goggles meet with standards set by the American National Standards Institute.)
- Do not wear contact lenses where there is smoke, dust, or fumes.
- Know where the nearest eyewash station is and how to use it.
- Report eye hazards to your supervisor.

- If someone gets an eye injury, call emergency medical services immediately.

At Home

- When outside, wear sunglasses that absorb the sun's harmful UV rays. A broad-brimmed hat also helps protect your eyes.
- When working on your car or around the house, be aware of the eye hazards. Mechanical hazards such as rust or flying objects, chemical hazards such as battery acid, and radiant hazards are common in the home shop. Wear approved eye protection – safety glasses and goggles should have Z87 markings on the side.
- Wear appropriate, approved eye protection when playing sports.
- Have an eye exam every two or three years, or sooner as directed. Early detection and correction of eye problems is important.
- Use common sense – protect your vision.

For more information on eye problems, see the **Eye Problems** symptom evaluation chart (page 44) in this manual.

Wellness for Soldiers

Deployment Medications

Maintaining your health is especially important during deployment. To prevent disease during and after deployment, you may receive various medications. For example, you may be asked to take tablets to prevent malaria before, during, and after deployment. It is your responsibility to take this medicine as directed. Your health depends on it.

Foot Care

There is nothing more important to a marching soldier than healthy feet. The following list shows good ways to keep your feet healthy.

- Keep your feet clean and dry. Wash your feet every day with soap and water. Dry them completely. Be sure to dry between your toes.
- Trim your toenails properly. Cut them straight across. Do not cut them too short. Do not cut them at the sides or corners because this can cause an ingrown toenail.
- To prevent fungal infections, wear shower shoes when using common shower areas.
- Wear clean, dry socks that are made mostly of acrylic or polyester.
- Change your socks at least once a day. Make sure they are not too tight.
- Wear proper shoes/boots for your activity. Make sure they fit well. Shoes that fit well will help prevent common problems such as blisters, bunions, and corns.
- Buy shoes at the end of the day when your feet are generally at their largest size.
- When running or marching, wear noncotton socks. Socks made of acrylic or acrylic and polyester pull water away from the skin and help prevent blisters.
- For long marches, consider wearing a thin acrylic, polyester, or nylon sock liner underneath your regular sock. This will help reduce friction and prevent blisters.

Remember - Foot pain is not normal. Do not ignore foot pain. See the **Foot Problems** symptom evaluation charts (pages 61-64) in this manual for more information.

Hot and Cold Weather Safety

When training, working, or playing during hot or cold weather, you must take extra care of yourself. Heat or cold injuries can sneak up on you. Injuries like heatstroke or frostbite can have few or no symptoms until it's too late. During hot or cold weather, you must protect your health **before** you start to feel bad.

Heat Injury

- Stay in good physical condition. Risk for heat injury is made worse by smoking, being tired, overweight, or sick.
- When out in hot weather, it's important to drink plenty of water. See the **Hydration** section (page 27) in this booklet for more information.
- Don't take salt tablets. You get all the salt you need in the food you eat.
- When exercising or training outdoors, wear lightweight clothing that lets air flow through. If your commander permits, keep clothing loose at the neck, wrists, and lower legs.
- Stay out of the sun when possible. Keep skin covered to avoid sunburn. Use a sunscreen on exposed skin. Wear a wide-brimmed hat and wrap-around sunglasses if possible.
- Work and rest as your leader directs.

If you think you have a heat injury, see the **Hot Weather Symptoms** evaluation chart (page 85) in this manual.

Cold Injury

You can avoid cold injuries by being prepared. You must understand the importance of personal hygiene, exercise, the care of your feet and hands, and use of protective clothing. Treat the cold like any other health hazard. Your hands, feet, and skin are especially at risk. If you have a question, ask your leader.

- Wear the clothing your leader tells you to wear. Clothing should be worn in loose layers. Avoid tight clothing, including tight underwear. The air between the layers will help keep you warm.
- Keep clothing clean and dry. Wet or damp clothing pulls heat from the body. Change wet or damp clothing as soon as possible. Remove or loosen clothing when in heated areas to prevent sweating.
- Keep hands dry and well-protected by wearing proper handgear. Mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Wear headgear to keep in body heat. Cover as much of the head and neck as possible. If out in the snow, wear goggles to protect against snow blindness.
- Keep feet warm and dry by wearing proper footgear and changing socks when wet. Don't forget that socks can become wet from sweat. Footgear should not be tight. Avoid standing directly on cold, wet ground when possible.
- Keep moving when possible. Exercising large muscles like your arms and legs warms up your body. If you must stay in a small area, exercise your toes, feet, fingers, and hands.
- Quit smoking and quit chewing tobacco – they reduce blood flow to the skin.
- Eat your meals to keep your energy up.
- Use the buddy system to watch for symptoms of cold injury.

If you think you have a cold injury, see the **Cold Weather Symptoms** evaluation chart (page 80) in this manual.

Hydration

Your body is constantly losing water, whether you are sweating or not. A loss of as little as 2 to 3 percent of your body weight due to water loss (4 pounds in a 160 pound soldier) can hurt your physical and mental performance. A loss of 10 percent of body water can cause death. Loss of body water is called dehydration. Even mild dehydration can leave you feeling tired and run down.

It is important to prevent dehydration. Refill your canteen at every opportunity. It is best to drink frequently and in small amounts rather than drinking large amounts at one time. Your body uses water better if you eat something while drinking. Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and alcoholic beverages are NOT substitutes for water. They just make you go to the bathroom more and increase dehydration.

Don't depend on feeling thirsty to tell you when to drink. Thirst is your body's last signal that you need water. Once you feel thirsty, you are already low on fluids. The best way to tell if you have enough body water is by your urine. A good amount of urine that is clear to light-yellow shows that your body has plenty of fluids. Dark urine means your body is low on water and you should drink a canteen of water as soon as possible.

The average adult should drink at least 8 cups of water a day but weather and activity will increase your needs. To replace body water, you should drink 2 cups of water for every pound of weight lost. However, you should not drink more than 1- ½ canteens per hour or 12 canteens per day.

For more information about hot weather, see the **Hot Weather Symptoms** evaluation chart (page 85) in this manual.

Insect Bites and Stings

As a soldier, you spend a lot of time outdoors with biting insects. Mosquitoes can carry diseases such as the West Nile Virus and malaria.

Ticks can also carry many diseases. Not all tick bites can make you sick but the sooner you remove an attached tick, the safer you will be. Check yourself frequently for ticks. Use the buddy system to check areas you can't see. When you go indoors, remove your clothes and shower, checking your skin and hair carefully.

To remove a tick, use tweezers and grab as close to the mouthparts as you can. Pull firmly and gently straight away from the skin. Don't put Vaseline or anything on the tick before pulling it off. To kill any ticks still on your clothes, put your clothes in a dryer for 20 minutes.

To protect yourself from insect bites, use DEET and permethrin repellents. DEET repellents are made for exposed skin not covered by clothing. DEET repellents offer good protection from mosquitoes and other flying insects. DEET also helps keep ticks from attaching to treated skin.

Permethrin repellents are made for clothing. Permethrin gives good protection from ticks and chiggers. Permethrin also offers protection from mosquitoes by preventing them from biting through clothing, but will not protect exposed skin where they most frequently bite. It can also be used to treat mosquito netting, such as bed nets.

DEET and permethrin are safe and effective when used as directed. For the best protection against insects, use both DEET and permethrin. The following suggestions will also help keep insects away from you.

- Cover as much skin as possible with clothing. Consider wearing loose-fitting long-sleeve shirts and long pants in the summer.
- Tuck shirt into pants and pants into socks or boots to keep ticks out.
- Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to see ticks.
- Plan ahead and treat clothing with permethrin before you go out into the field. Permethrin binds strongly to fabric and remains effective through several washings. Once a garment has been treated with permethrin, it will give off no odor, even when it gets wet.
- Store treated clothing in a plastic bag to help preserve repellent effectiveness and identify treated clothing.

DO NOT use animal flea and tick collars on yourself. The chemicals in these can make you very sick.

If you have been bitten or stung by an insect, see the **Insect Bites or Stings** symptom evaluation chart (page 72) in this manual.

Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene is very important because of the close living quarters frequently found in the Army environment. Disease or illness can spread rapidly and affect your entire group.

Being unclean or smelly affects the morale of everyone around you. A daily bath or shower helps maintain cleanliness, decrease body odor, and prevent common skin diseases. Medicated powders and deodorants are also available to maintain personal hygiene.

WASH YOUR HANDS!

Wash your hands frequently. Hand washing is the number one way to prevent the spread of most common illnesses.

Bathe frequently

If showers or baths are not available, use a washcloth daily to wash these areas:

- Your genital area.
- Your armpits.
- Your feet.
- Other areas where you sweat or that become wet such as between thighs and between buttocks.

Keep skin dry

- Use foot powder on your feet, especially if you have had fungal infections on your feet in the past.
- Use talcum powder in areas where wetness is a problem, such as under arms, between the thighs or, for females, under the breasts.
- If you get any kind of rash or break-out on your skin, see a healthcare provider.

Wear proper clothing

- Wear loose-fitting uniforms – they allow for better ventilation. Tight uniforms reduce blood flow and ventilation.

- Don't wear nylon or silk-type undergarments in hot or humid environments. Cotton underpants and t-shirts are more absorbent and allow the skin to dry.

For more information on skin rashes, see the **Skin** symptom evaluation charts (pages 71-79) in this manual. If you are having a problem with your feet, see the **Foot Problems** symptom evaluation charts (pages 61-64).

Weight Management

Weight management is important to your personal and professional life. Being too fat or too thin can be a hazard to your health and well-being. It can make you feel bad about yourself and, possibly, hurt your career.

As a soldier, you must be ready for combat at any time. Being too heavy or having too much body fat can:

- Make you less fit.
- Hurt your ability to perform your duties.
- Increase the risk of injuries to your feet, knees, hips, and lower back.

Being too thin is not good either. Extremely lightweight soldiers:

- Are more at risk for injury.
- Take more time to recover from injury.
- Get tired faster.

Being too skinny has also been linked to heart problems and poor concentration.

The bottom line in maintaining, gaining, or losing weight or body fat is energy balance. Like a car needs gas, your body needs food. Food gives your body the energy it needs to work. Food energy is measured in calories. If you take in more calories than your body uses, your body stores the extra calories as fat and you gain weight. If you take in fewer calories than you use, your body burns stored calories and you lose weight.

To lose weight:

- Eat smaller portions of food.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Cut down on high-fat foods like margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressings, and fried foods.
- Cut down on high sugar foods like sodas, candy, and desserts.
- Eat regularly – don't skip meals.
- Do aerobic exercise 4 to 6 times a week.
- Do strength training 2 to 3 times a week.

To gain weight:

- Eat at least 4 times a day. Always have a snack handy.
- Increase your portion sizes.
- Don't fill up on water. Make sure what you drink has calories.
- A moderate weight training program will help build muscle. But don't go overboard or you will use more calories than you are taking in.
- Weight-gain shakes and bars are not needed, but they can be a handy way to increase your calorie intake.

The key to weight gain or loss is slow and steady – about one pound a week. Changes made faster than that put you at risk of losing muscle or gaining fat.

Women's Health

A gynecological or "GYN" exam is a good way to take control of your health and to get information to reduce your risk for unintended pregnancies. You can go to learn about birth control options and how to protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

During the GYN exam, the health care professional will probably do a breast exam and a pelvic exam. The breast exam looks for any lumps that might be cancer. The pelvic exam checks for any problems inside your lower abdomen. Ask your health care professional to fully explain any tests or checks that will be done before the exam begins.

Mission-Impactors

The barracks environment can be a tricky place for a young, female soldier. You may get a lot of attention from male soldiers. There is nothing wrong with a little flirting, but sexual relations of any kind puts you at risk for pregnancy. It's unfair but true: During sex, you are at risk for pregnancy – not your partner. Being a young, single mother is very, very difficult.

Sexual relations also put you at risk for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). STDs don't just "happen to the other guy." Not all STDs are curable. Many STDs, including AIDS, have few if any symptoms in the beginning. Some can cause serious health problems and even death. And it is 10 times easier for a woman to get the AIDS virus from an infected man than for a man to get the AIDS virus from an infected woman.

The best way to avoid an unintended pregnancy or contracting an STD is to avoid any kind of sexual relations (vaginal, oral, or anal). The next best protection is to use a long-term birth control method ***plus*** a male or female condom every time you have any kind of intercourse. Long-term birth control methods for women include the birth control pill, birth control shot, or inserts under the skin.

Pregnancy

If you think you are pregnant, follow your installation's guidelines about getting a pregnancy test. If you are pregnant, you will be referred to a qualified health care provider who will talk to you about the things you should and shouldn't do to have a healthy pregnancy.

If you are pregnant, use your chain of command to obtain the information you need to make decisions about your career and your baby. Once you have made your decisions, papers need to be filled out. Your company commander is the person to ask about things like:

- Medical benefits
- Retention or Separation
- Clothing and uniforms

- Duties
- BAQ and Government Quarters
- Pregnancy and Post-pregnancy PT
- Army Weight Control Program

Talk to your health care provider about physical training during pregnancy. Pregnant soldiers who keep up a regular, modified-for-pregnancy PT program may have fewer problems during pregnancy and delivery as well as an easier time returning to unit PT after delivery. Walking, swimming, stationary cycling and low- or no-impact aerobics are some options. Talk to your Master Fitness Trainer about your pregnancy PT program.

If you have questions that your company commander or health care provider can't answer, ask for a referral to a person who can, such as a social worker.

For more information on women's health, see the **Women's Health** symptom evaluation charts (pages 86-88) in this manual.

Women's Health in the Field

It's important to maintain your health and readiness in the field. Eat at least a part of each component of your MRE. Drink plenty of water. Sleep when you can. Take care of your personal hygiene. During your period, it's important to wash your groin area daily. If showers are not available, use a washcloth and clean water to wash your groin area, armpits, feet, and other areas that get sweaty.

When getting ready for the field, there are a few things that will help with personal hygiene. Baby wipes are good for removing camouflage. They can also be used when no toilet paper is available. Panty liners/sanitary pads should be packed, even if you don't expect your period. Use of panty liners, changed often, can help keep you clean, even when it's not your period.

When in the field, avoid using perfume, scented lotions, or scented soaps since these will attract bugs. However, unscented lotion should be used to keep the skin from drying and cracking.

Cotton underpants will keep you coolest and most comfortable. Avoid silky-type material. For a bra, choose a cotton sports bra designed for support.

Part 2 - Symptom Evaluation Charts

Head and Chest

Back and Stomach

Muscles and Joints

Skin

General Symptoms

Women’s Health

How to Use the Symptom Evaluation Charts

The symptom evaluation charts are part of the Self-care Program. If you have general questions about the Self-care Program, ask your drill instructor. If you have questions about the symptoms or self-care measures described in this manual, ask a health care provider. If you have questions about the over-the counter medications described in the Self-care Program, ask the self-care pharmacist.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I use these symptom evaluation charts?
Use these charts whenever you have a negative change in your health.

What if I have a symptom that is not in this manual?
Not every health symptom is included in the Soldier Health Maintenance Manual. The manual covers common health symptoms that may be minor enough to be treated with self-care measures. If you have a health symptom that is not listed, see a health care provider.

How do I use these charts?
The symptom evaluation charts are to be used along with the Self-care Program. The charts include a brief introduction to each symptom along with a list of questions to help you decide whether you should:

- Get medical help right away,
- Go to Sick Call, or
- Use a Self-care measure.

Read each symptom evaluation question and follow the YES or NO arrows. If you answer NO to all the questions listed for a condition and reach the bottom of the chart, it is probably appropriate for you to use self-care measures.

Remember: You are the best judge of your own health. If you answer NO to all the symptom evaluation questions but still think you should go to sick call, then go to sick call. If you are having trouble performing your duties, you should see a health care provider.

How long should I use self-care?
At the end of each symptom evaluation chart is a suggested time frame for using self-care measures. This time frame is ***underlined and in italics***. If you use self-care and your health symptom doesn't start to get better within the suggested time frame, you should see a health care provider. For example, the guidance for **Earache** is "Go to sick call if the ear pain doesn't get better within 24 hours or the pain keeps you from your duties or activities."

Look over the symptom evaluation chart at least once a day to make sure you should be continuing to use self-care measures. You should only use self-care within the suggested time frame if you think you are getting better. If at any time you think you are getting worse, you should see a health care provider.

What should I do if I use self-care and my symptom gets worse?
If at any time you think you are getting worse, you should see a health care provider.

Where do I get the over-the-counter medications listed under Self-care Measures?
The over-the-counter medications listed under self-care measures are available through the Self-care Program in the Self-care Pharmacy. Complete instructions regarding how to use the Self-care Pharmacy are provided in the Self-care training class.

When using any medication, make sure you follow all directions from the pharmacist as well as instructions on the package. Before you leave the Self-care pharmacy, make sure you completely understand how to use any medication you have received.

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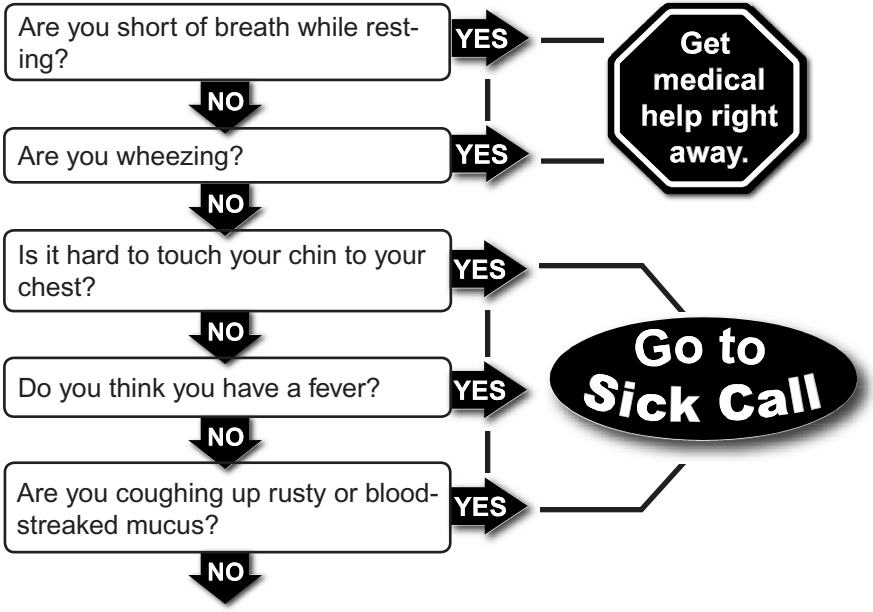
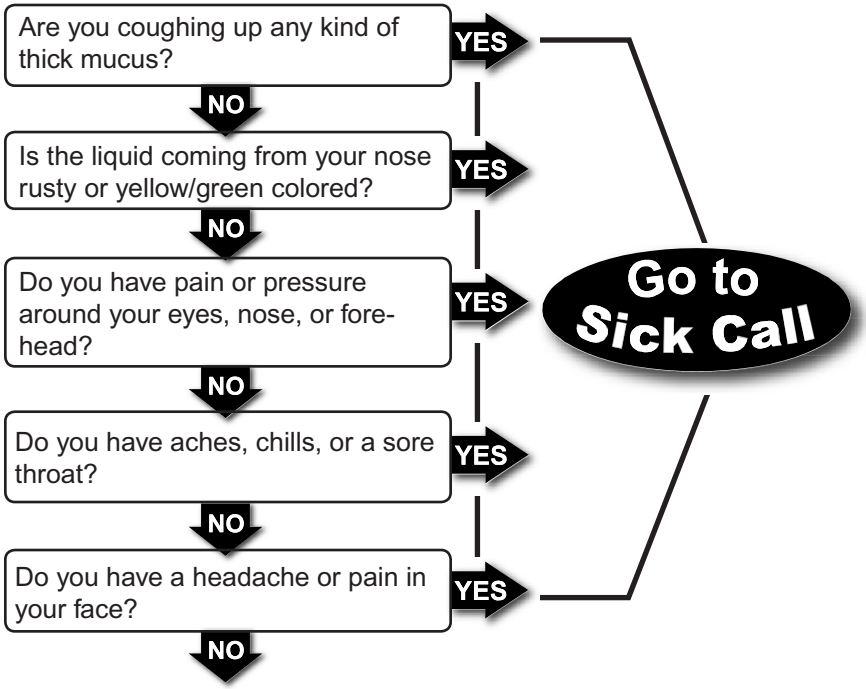
Head and Chest

Cold

Colds are caused by germs that enter your body through your eyes, nose, and mouth. The best way to avoid colds is to wash your hands often. It also helps to stand 3 to 5 feet away from someone who is coughing or sneezing, or turn your back a little to keep your nose and eyes away from the germs flying through the air.

When you have a cold, you might have a runny nose, cough, sore throat, and maybe even chills and a fever. No medicine will make a cold go away but some medicines will help you to feel better while the cold runs its course. However, cold symptoms might be a sign of other problems such as allergies, the flu, strep throat, or even pneumonia. If you have cold symptoms, use this symptom evaluation chart.





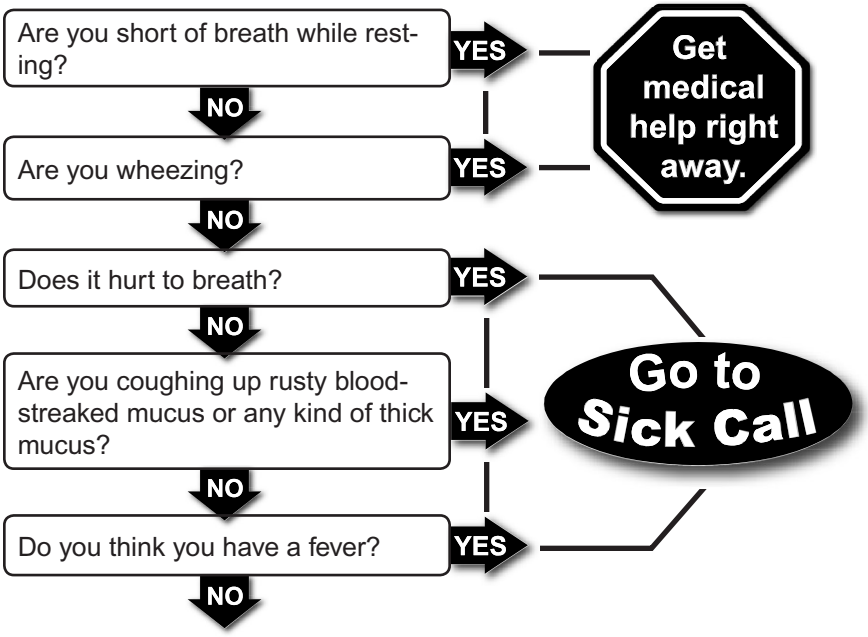
Use Self-Care Measures:

- Keep your germs to yourself by covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands often.
- Gargle with salt water: ¼ tea-spoon of salt in 1 cup warm water three times a day.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Hot soups can help unclog your nose and soothe your throat.
- Get as much rest as you can.
- Use an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen, acet-aminophen, or aspirin for aches as directed.
- If you have a runny nose or stuffy nose, use an over-the-counter deconges-tant as directed.
- If you have a sore throat, use over-the-counter throat lozenges as directed.

Go to sick call if you don't start to get better within the next 3 days, or if cold symp-toms are keeping you from your duties. Follow the chart if you get any of the symp-toms listed.

Cough

A cough is the way the body reacts to something in the throat, nose, or lungs. Coughs can be dry and hacking – these are called dry coughs. Coughs can bring up mucus – these are called productive coughs. Coughs are usually caused by colds or flu, smoking, or allergies. If you have a cough, use this symptom evaluation chart.



Use Self-Care Measures:

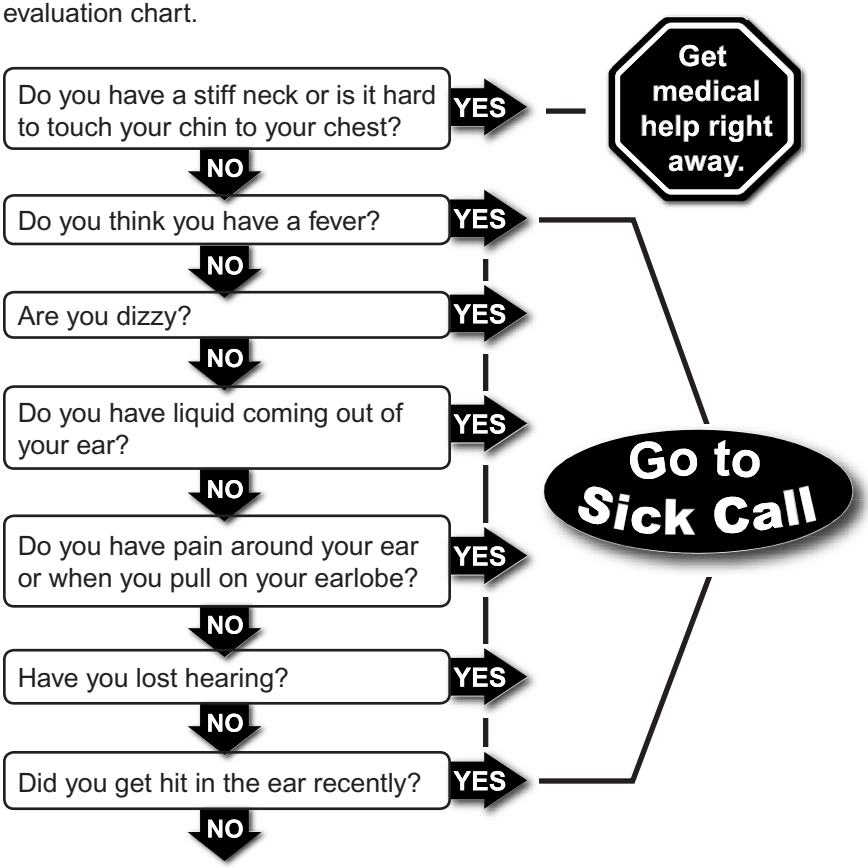
- Avoid smoking or smoke-filled areas.
- Drink more fluids to make the mucus easier to cough up. A hot shower can also help.
- If you are coughing up mucus, use an over-the-counter expectorant cough medicine as directed.
- If your cough is dry, try an over-the-counter cough suppressant as directed.

- Use cough drops or hard candy to decrease the tickle in your throat.

Go to sick call if the cough lasts longer than 2 weeks. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Ear Pain

Ear pain can be dull and throbbing or sharp and stabbing. An earache can have many causes but is most common in people with colds or allergies. If you are having pain in or around your ear, use this symptom evaluation chart.



Continue to next page.

Ear Pain - continued

Are you having cold symptoms such as a runny or stuffy nose, cough, or sore throat?

YES → Use the symptom evaluation chart for a **Cold** (page 40). If the ear pain doesn't get better within 24 hours, go to Sick Call.

NO ↓

Use Self-Care Measures:

- Put a warm, wrung-out washcloth next to your ear. Repeat as needed to help the pain.
- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or aspirin as directed.
- Use an over-the-counter decongestant as directed.

Go to sick call if the ear pain doesn't get better within 24 hours, or the pain keeps you from your duties or activities. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Eye Problems

Eye problems can include pain, burning, itching, redness, clear or yellow discharge, or decreased vision. An object or liquid can get into your eye and injure it. Eye problems must be taken seriously. Your vision depends on it.

If you have a problem with your eyes or with your vision, get medical help right away.

If you get any chemical in your eye, wash it out immediately with water for 15 minutes before or while getting emergency medical help.

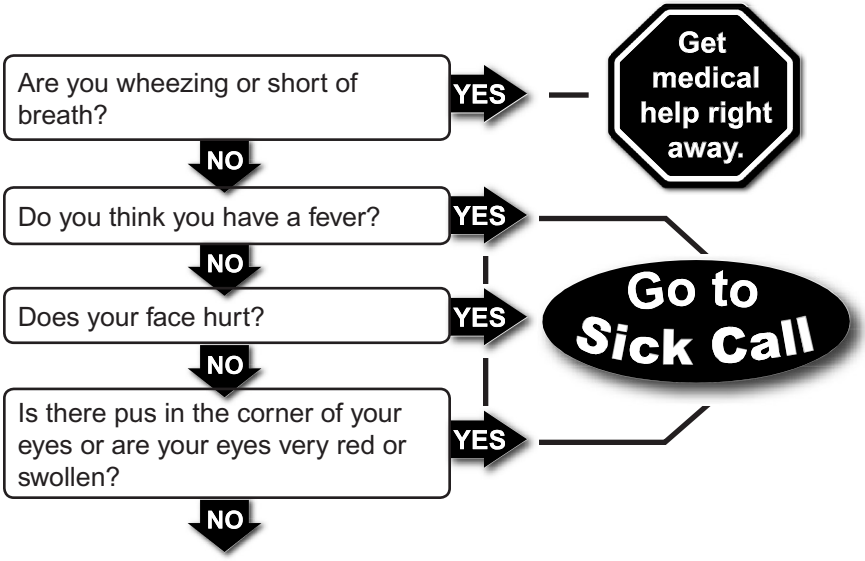
If your buddy gets an eye injury, call emergency medical services immediately.

Self-Care: Protect Your Eyes

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Follow eye safety signs and procedures. Know what to do if a hazardous material splashes in your eye.
- Always wear approved eye protection for mechanical, chemical, biological, or radiant energy (such as sunlight, lasers, or welding) hazards. Make sure your eye protection is clean, is in good shape, and has Z87 marked on the side.
- Do not wear contact lenses where there is smoke, dust, or fumes.
- Know where the nearest eyewash station is and how to use it.
- Report eye hazards to your supervisor.

Hay Fever or Allergies

Allergies and hay fever are very common. If you have allergies or hay fever, you may get itchy or watery eyes or a runny or stuffy nose with sneezing. If you have hay fever, it is usually worse in the spring. If you are having allergy symptoms, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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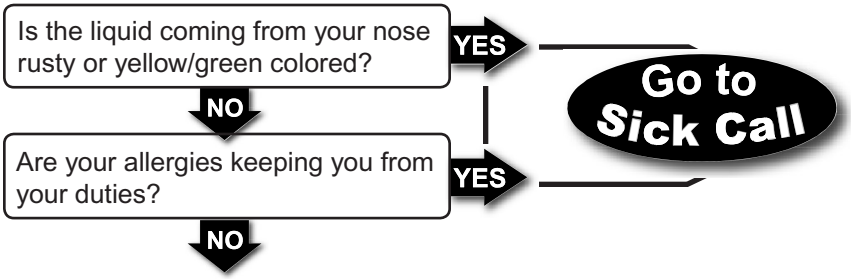
Hay Fever or Allergies - continued



Use Self-Care Measures:

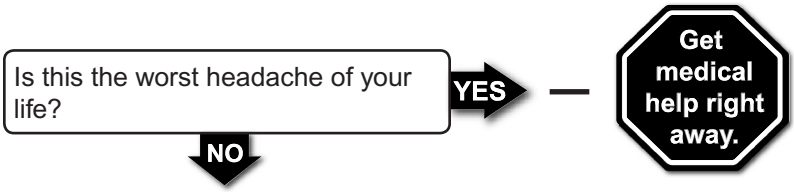
- Use an over-the-counter antihistamine for your runny nose as directed.
- If you have a stuffy nose, use an over-the-counter decongestant as directed.
- Use eye drops for itchy or watery eyes as directed.

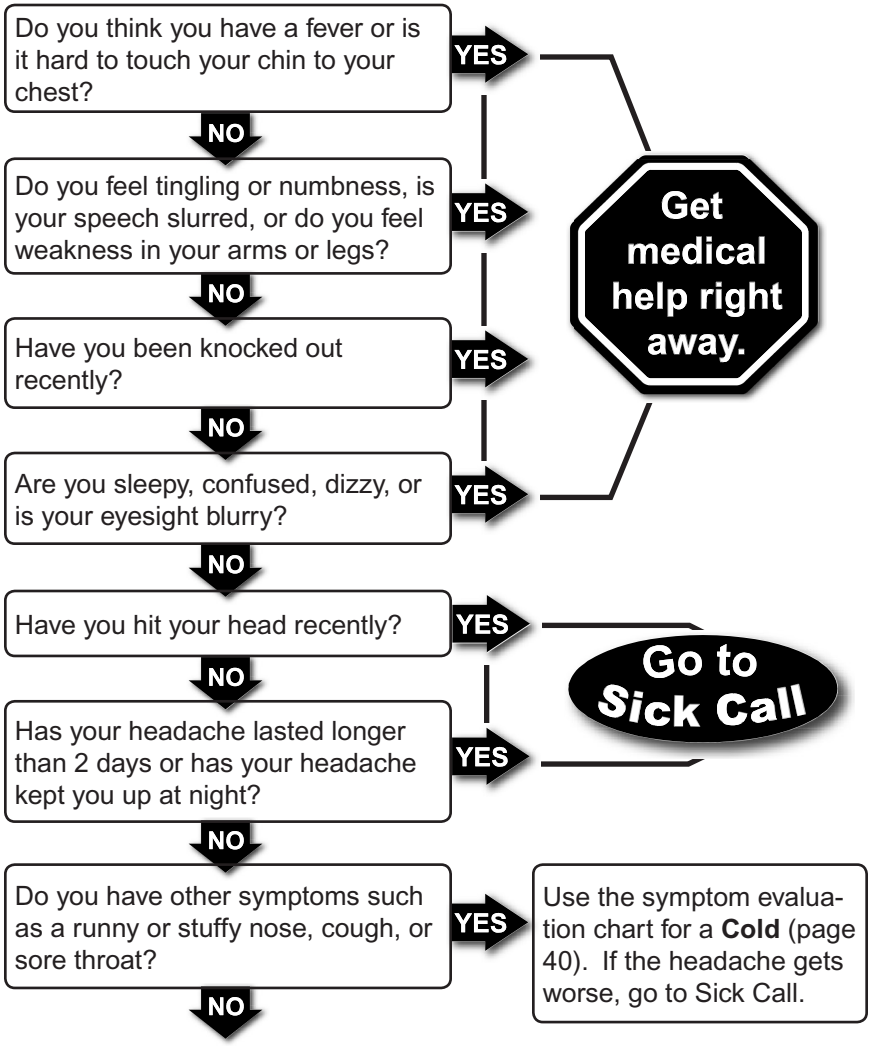
Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Headache

Headache is one of the most common medical complaints. Most headaches are not part of any disease or medical problem. Causes of headaches include stress, not getting enough sleep, skipping meals, or drinking alcohol. A healthy lifestyle that includes adequate sleep, a healthy diet, and stress management is one of the best ways to avoid getting headaches.

Headaches can be dull and throbbing or sharp and stabbing. If you have a pain in your head, use this symptom evaluation chart.





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Headache - continued

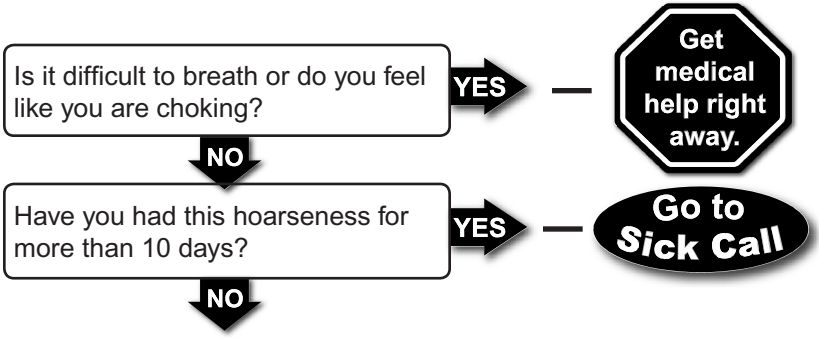
Use Self-Care Measures:

- Massage the base of your head with your thumbs, starting under your ears and working back and then up to your temples.
- Apply heat to the back of your upper neck.
- Take a warm shower.
- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or aspirin as directed.

Go to sick call if your headache lasts longer than 2 days or if you are having trouble performing your duties. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Hoarseness

A hoarse, scratchy voice is usually caused by a sore throat from a cold or flu. However, there can be other causes. If you have a hoarse voice or have lost your voice, use this symptom evaluation chart.



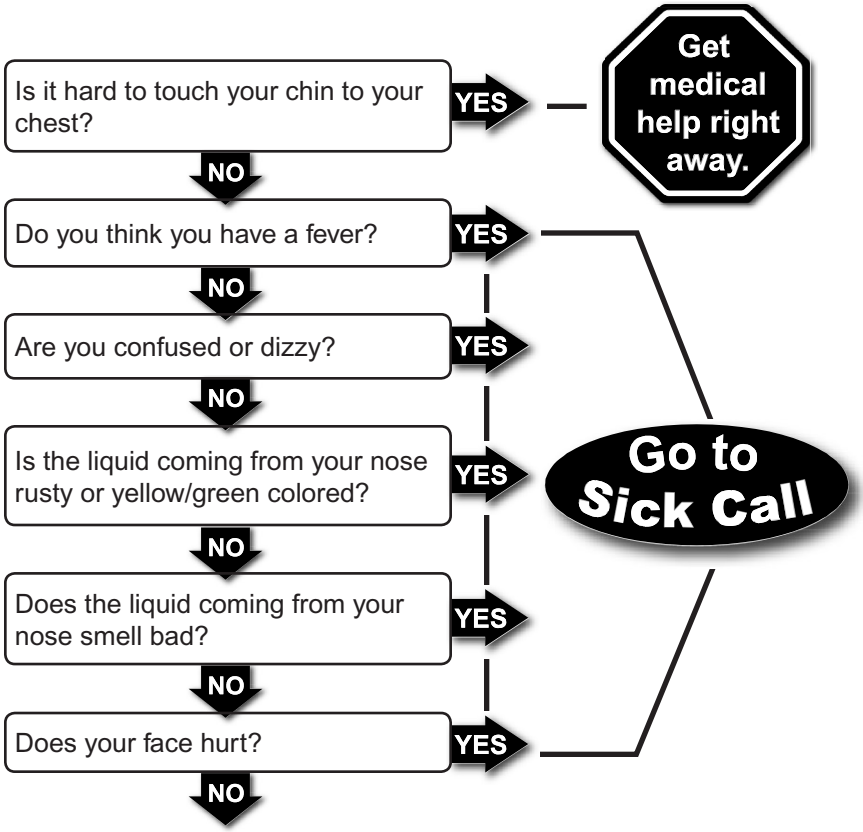
Use Self-Care Measures:

- If you smoke, quit.
- Rest your voice. If you must speak, speak normally. Trying to whisper is harder on your voice.
- Drinking water or sucking on hard candy may sooth your throat.
- Gargle with salt water: ¼ teaspoon of salt in 1 cup warm water three times a day.

Go to sick call if you don't get better in 1 week. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Nose or Sinus Problems

The passages that lead from your nose into your head are called sinuses. Sinus problems can be caused by a cold, allergies, or an infection. Sinus problems can cause pain around your eyes and in your head, a stuffy nose, or a runny nose. Sinus problems can also cause a sore throat or cough as mucus from your nose drips down the back of your throat. If you have a problem with your nose or sinuses, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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Nose or Sinus Problems - continued

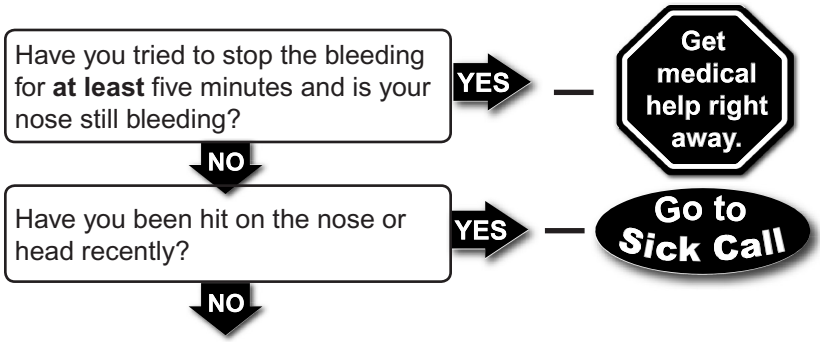
Use Self-Care Measures:

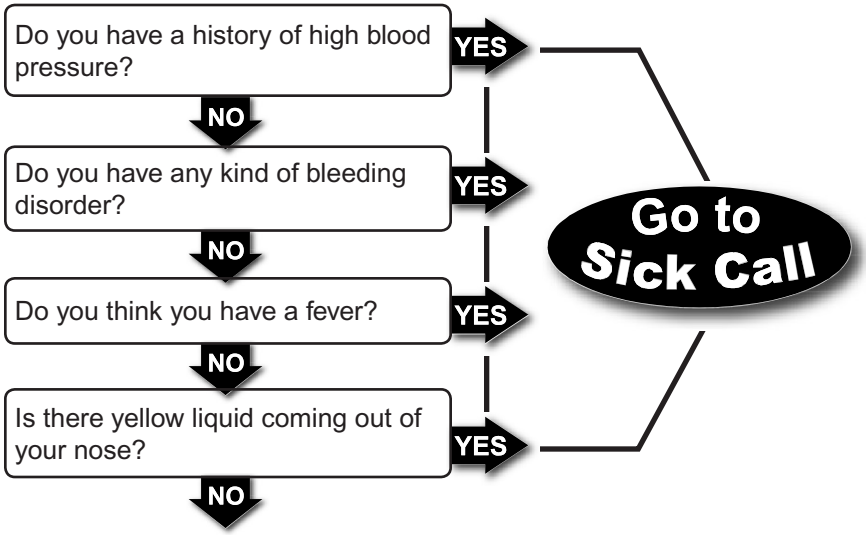
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Take a hot shower when possible and breathe the steam.
- Put a warm, wrung-out washcloth over your eyes and cheeks to help the pain.
- Use an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or aspirin as directed.
- If you have a runny or stuffy nose, use an over-the-counter decongestant as directed.

Go to sick call if you don't start to get better within 3 days. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Nosebleed

You might get a nosebleed if you have a cold or allergies and are blowing your nose a lot. Getting hit on the nose or dry air during the winter might also give you a nosebleed. Nosebleeds are usually not a sign of a medical problem and you can usually stop the bleeding yourself. If your nose is bleeding, use this symptom evaluation chart.





Use Self-Care Measures:

- Sit up normally – don't lie down.
- Gently squeeze your nose with the thumb and forefinger just below the hard part of the nose, making sure both nostrils are squeezed shut, for **at least** 5 minutes.
- Do not pack the nose with anything like gauze or tissue. This makes it harder for the bleeding to stop.
- Once the bleeding has stopped, don't blow your nose. If you must blow your nose, be very gentle or you might start the bleeding again.

If you have a cold or allergies that caused the nosebleed, follow the **Cold** (page 40) or **Hay Fever/Allergy** (page 45) symptom evaluation charts. ***Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.***

Sore Throat

When you have a sore throat, your throat hurts and it may be painful to swallow. Sore throats can be caused by many things, including dry air, smoking, or allergies. A sore throat can also be caused by a virus or bacteria. If you have sore throat, use this symptom evaluation chart.

Do you have aches, headache, dry cough, or runny nose?

YES → Use the symptom evaluation chart for a **Cold** (page 40).

NO ↓

Use Self-Care Measures:

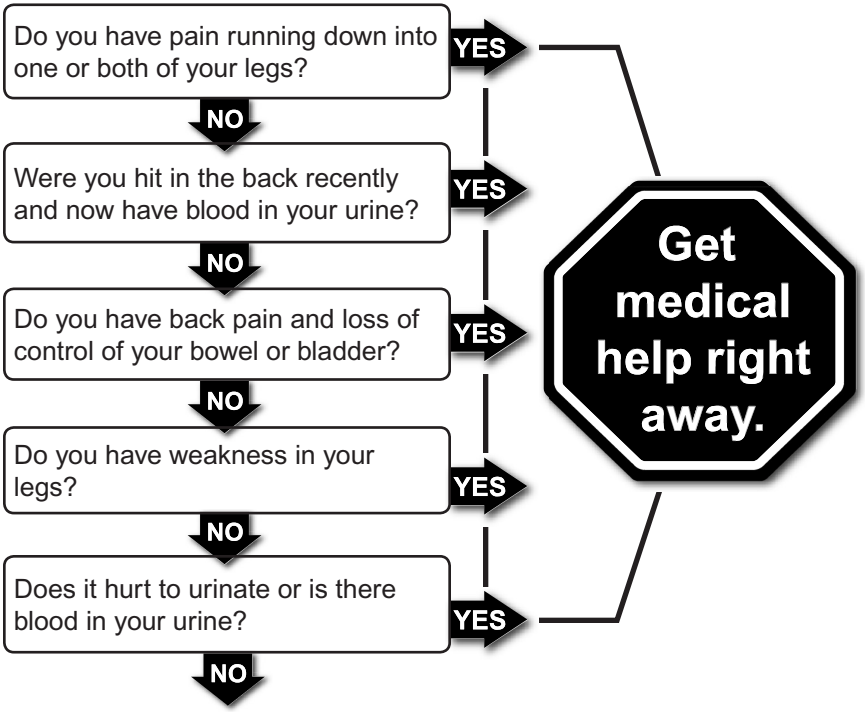
- Gargle with salt water: ¼ teaspoon of salt in 1 cup warm water three times a day.
- Take acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or aspirin and throat lozenges to relieve the pain as directed.

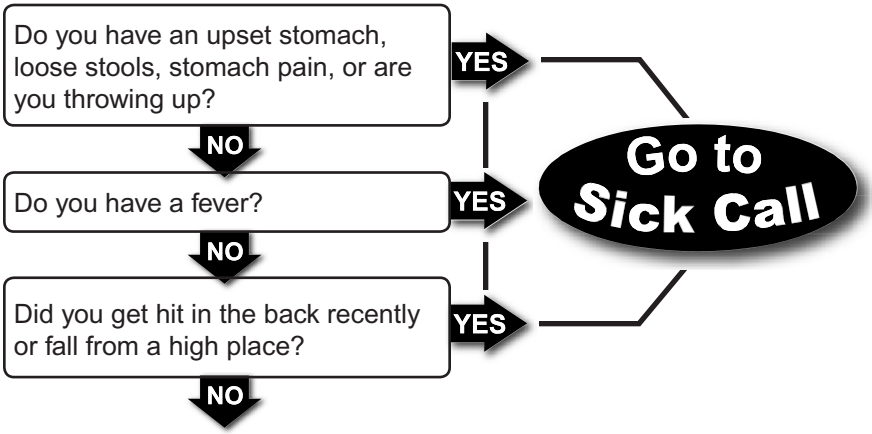
Go to sick call if the sore throat continues for 3 days. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Back and Stomach

Back Pain

Back pain, especially in the lower back, is very common in soldiers. You will feel pain or stiffness in your upper, middle or lower back. Back pain can be caused by many things, such as an injury, bad posture, or sleeping on a too-soft mattress. If your back hurts, use this symptom evaluation chart.





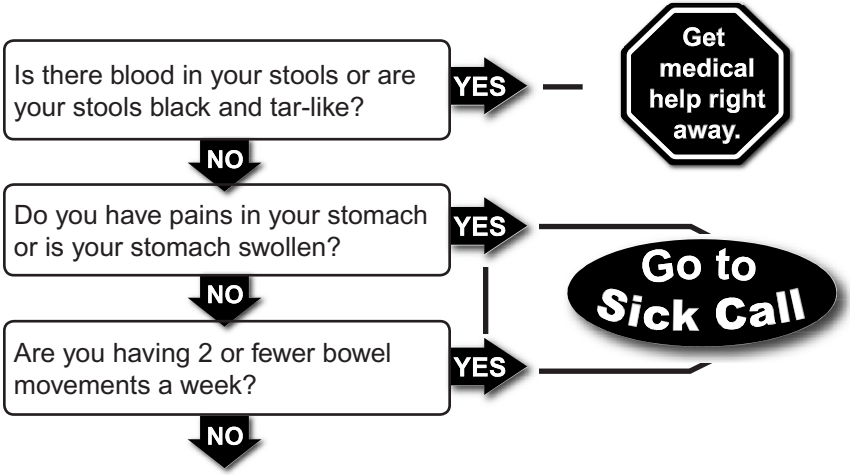
Use Self-Care Measures:

- Use an over-the-counter pain reliever such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or aspirin as directed.
- Put a cold pack on your back for 20 minutes. Repeat every 2 to 3 hours during the first day or two. You can make a cold pack by wrapping ice in a towel. Don't put ice directly on your skin – this can cause ice burns.
- A heating pad or hot compress may help relieve the pain after the first few days.
- A bedboard, an extra firm mattress, or sleeping on a mattress on the floor may help.
- The best treatment is prevention: Once you feel better, start an exercise program to strengthen the muscles of the stomach and back.

Go to sick call if you cannot perform your duties. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Constipation

There is no "correct" number of bowel movements to have per day or per week. Everyone is different and you shouldn't worry about the number of bowel movements you have per week. However, you may have constipation if your stools are hard, difficult or uncomfortable to pass. If you think you have constipation, use this symptom evaluation chart.



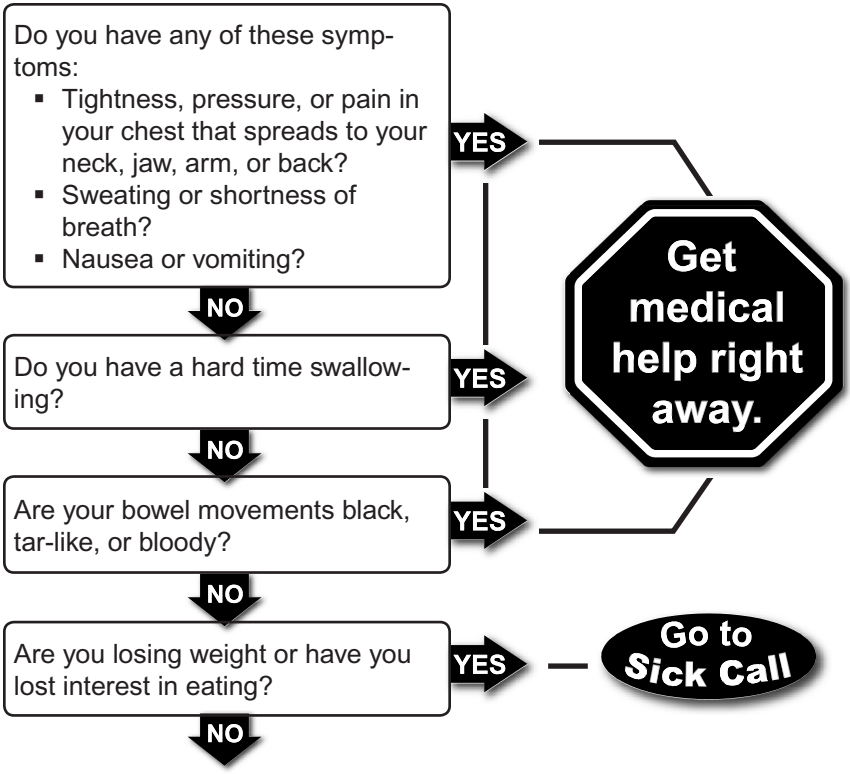
Use Self-Care Measures:

- Drink plenty of water. Water gets absorbed into your stools and helps them to pass easier.
- Eat plenty of high fiber foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads, and bran cereals. Fiber helps stools to pass easier.
- Exercise also helps to get things moving.
- A laxative can be used once to get things moving but don't use laxatives again and again. Your body can become used to them and make the problem worse. Use laxatives as directed.

Go to sick call if your bowel movements are more than 4 days apart. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Heartburn

Heartburn is a burning feeling in your throat or chest. It usually happens after you eat, or when you bend over or lie down. Heartburn can be caused by certain foods you eat, some medicines, and stomach ulcers. Heartburn is also made worse by drinking alcohol, smoking, stress, and being overweight. If you think you have heartburn, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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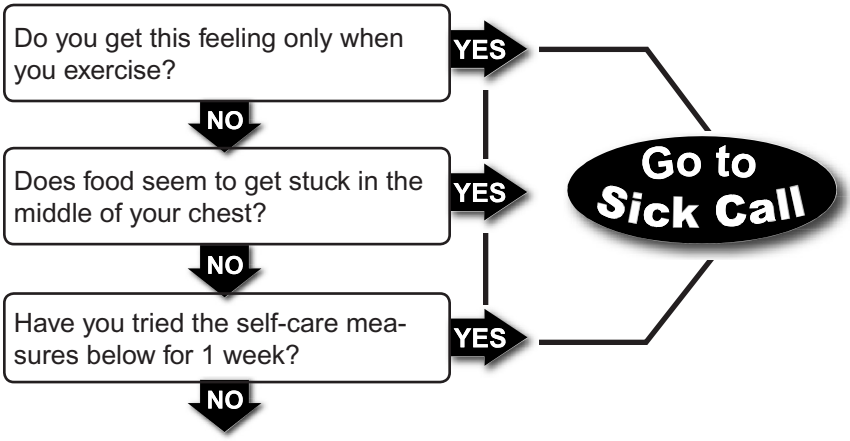
Heartburn - continued



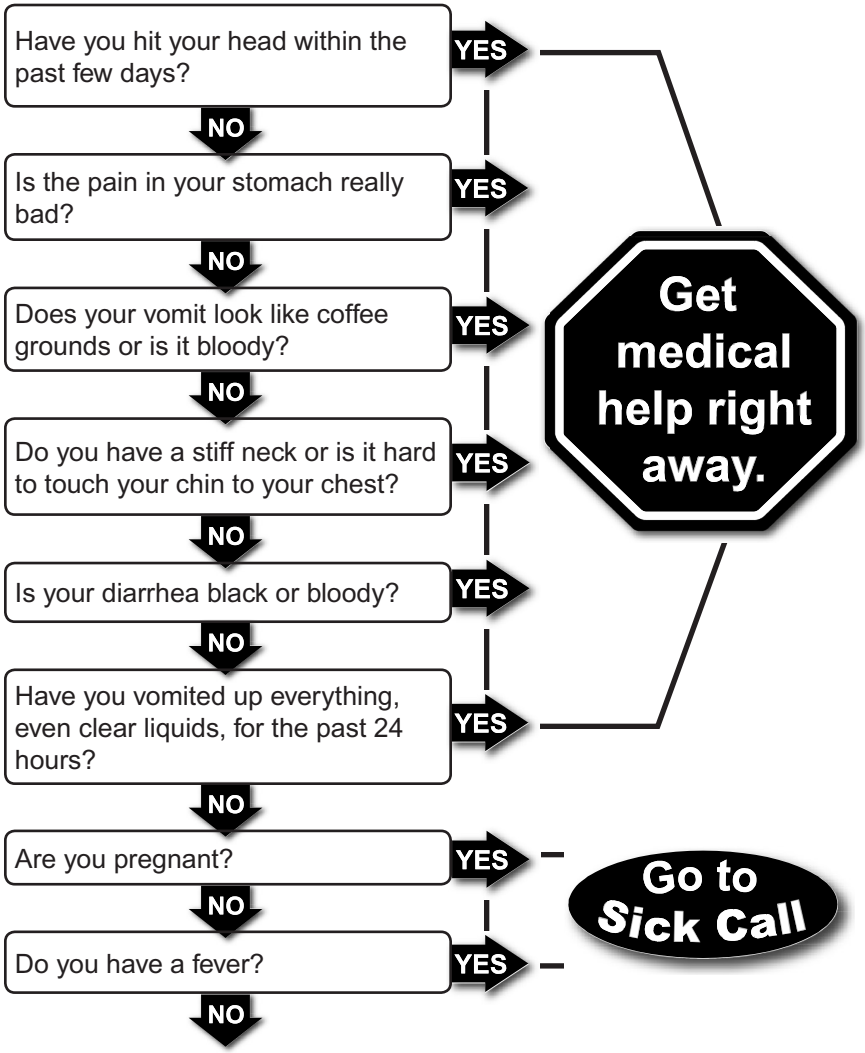
Use Self-Care Measures:

- Avoid those foods or drinks that give you heartburn.
- Sit straight while eating. Stand up or walk after you eat.
- Eat slowly and chew your food.
- Avoid large meals and alcohol.
- If heartburn bothers you at night, raise the head of your bed 6 inches. Don't eat 2 to 3 hours before bed.
- Take an over-the-counter antacid as directed.

Go to sick call if the symptoms have not cleared up in 1 week.
Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Nausea, Vomiting, or Diarrhea

Nausea is the feeling that you are about to throw up. Vomiting is when you actually throw up. The most common cause of nausea and vomiting in young adults is a virus. When a virus is the cause of the illness, you may also have diarrhea (frequent, loose stools). This mix of symptoms is often called a "stomach flu." Use this symptom evaluation chart if you have nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.



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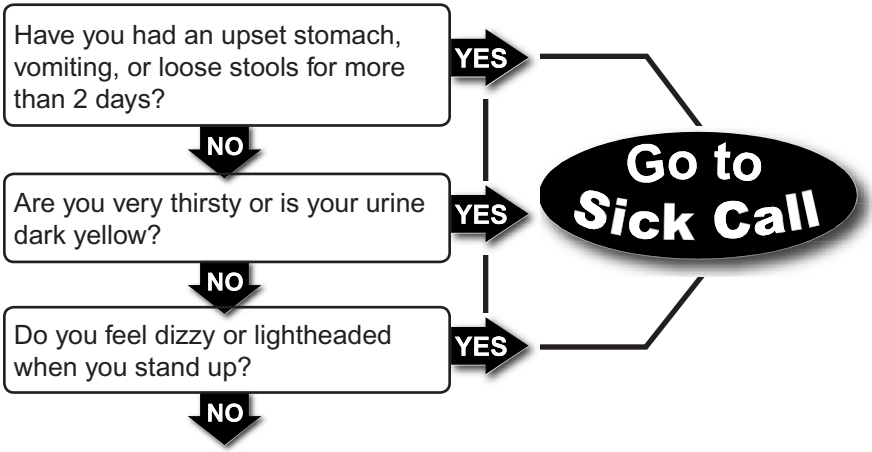
Nausea, Vomiting, or Diarrhea - continued



Use Self-Care Measures:

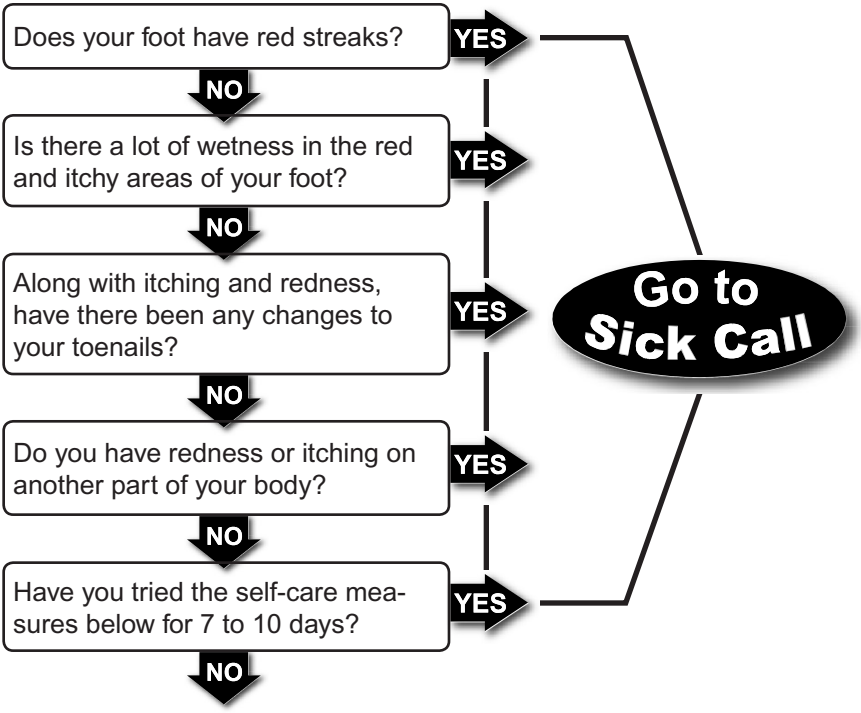
- Drink plenty of clear fluids such as water, sports drinks, or broth to avoid dehydration. Take small, frequent sips.
- Rest as much as you can.
- Anti-diarrheal medication can be used to control loose stools, but the best treatment is to let diarrhea run its course. Medicine might even make the problem last longer.
- Solid foods should be avoided until you are feeling better. Start with small meals and plain, bland foods like toast or oatmeal.

Go to sick call if the nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea last longer than 2 days, or if you cannot perform your duties. Use the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Muscles and Joints

Foot Problems - Athlete's Foot

Athlete's foot is caused by a fungus that lives in damp, warm, and dark areas like shower rooms, rubber boots, and old running shoes. Athlete's foot usually looks like little blisters between the toes. These can pop, causing itching and little sharp pains. The skin might also crack or look scaly. The fungus that causes athlete's foot can cause an infection any place on your body that is often damp, like the groin area, armpits, and under women's breasts. If you think you have athlete's foot, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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Foot Problems - Athlete's Foot continued

Use Self-Care Measures:

- Wash your feet every morning and evening.
- Dry them well, especially between the toes.
- Change your socks and shoes at least one extra time during the day.
- Sprinkle foot powder in boots when they are not being worn.
- Use an over-the-counter anti-fungal cream as directed.
- To prevent fungal infections, wear shower shoes when using common shower areas.

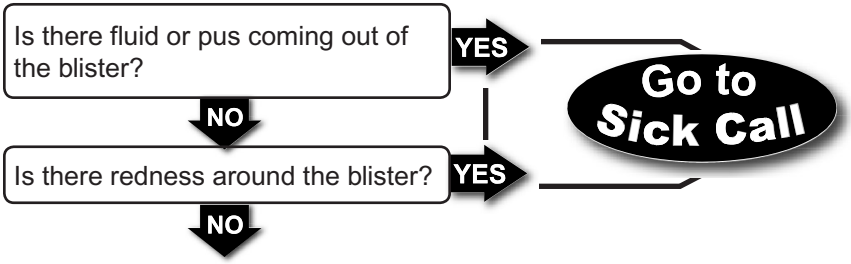
Go to sick call if the symptoms have not cleared up in 7 to 10 days. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

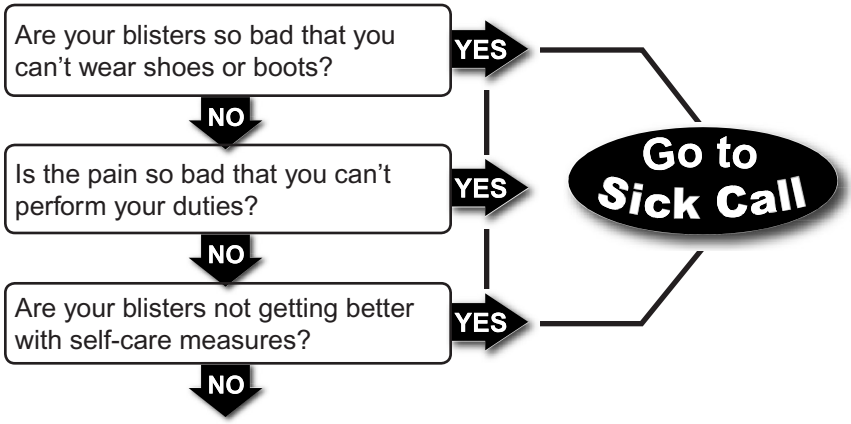
Foot Problems - Blisters

A blister is a raised spot on the skin filled with liquid. Blisters on your feet are caused by wearing shoes that don't fit right or socks in poor repair.

To avoid getting blisters, keep socks and shoes in good repair. Make sure shoes fit right and your boots are broken in properly. When wearing combat boots, wear a thin pair of nonabsorbent, noncotton socks as a liner under your boot socks. Boot socks should also be made of a noncotton, nonabsorbent material.

Also wear noncotton socks during physical training. Socks made of acrylic or acrylic and polyester pull water away from the skin and help reduce blisters. If you have a blister on your foot, use this symptom evaluation chart.





Use Self-Care Measures:
Use this treatment before "hot spots" develop into blisters.

Small Blisters

- Don't pop your blister - your own skin is the best protection for healing.
- Place a small moleskin "doughnut" around the blister to protect it from further irritation.

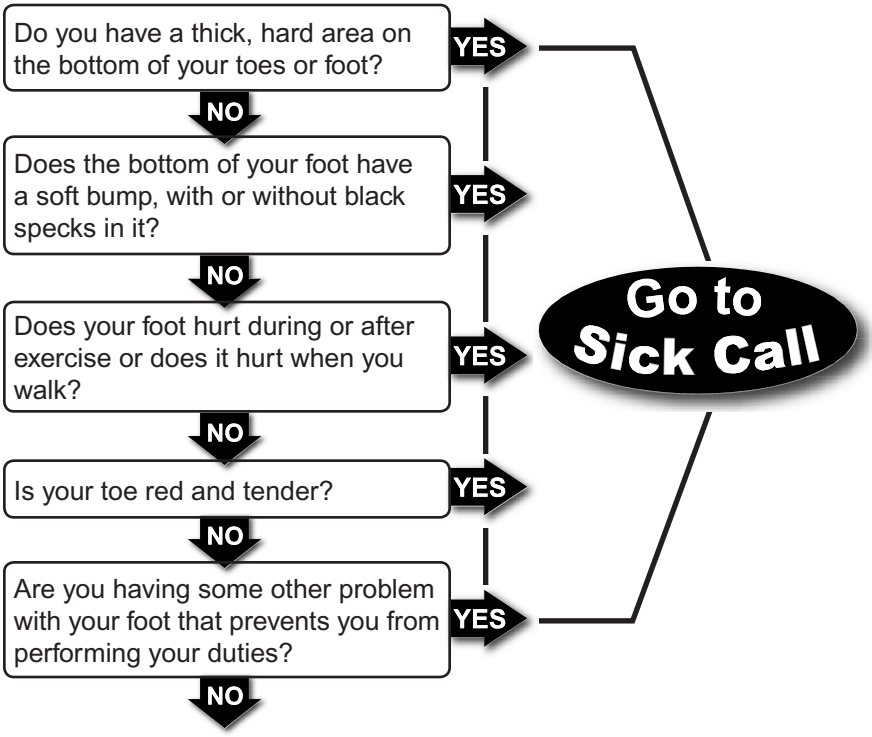
Large/Painful Blisters

- Clean the blister area with soap and water.
- Heat the tip of a pin over a flame until it glows red, allow it to cool, and puncture a small hole at the edge of the blister.
- Drain fluid with gentle pressure, but leave the "roof" of the blister intact.
- Cover with a clean dressing such as a Band Aid.
- Apply moleskin over the dressing to keep the dressing in place and protect the blister from further irritation.
- Clean area and replace bandage dressing daily.

Go to sick call if the blister is no better in 48 hours. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Foot Problems - Other

Your feet get used all day long. They can get corns, warts, or other symptoms that are painful and need medical attention. If you are having a problem with your feet, use this symptom evaluation chart.



To keep your feet healthy, use Self-Care Measures:

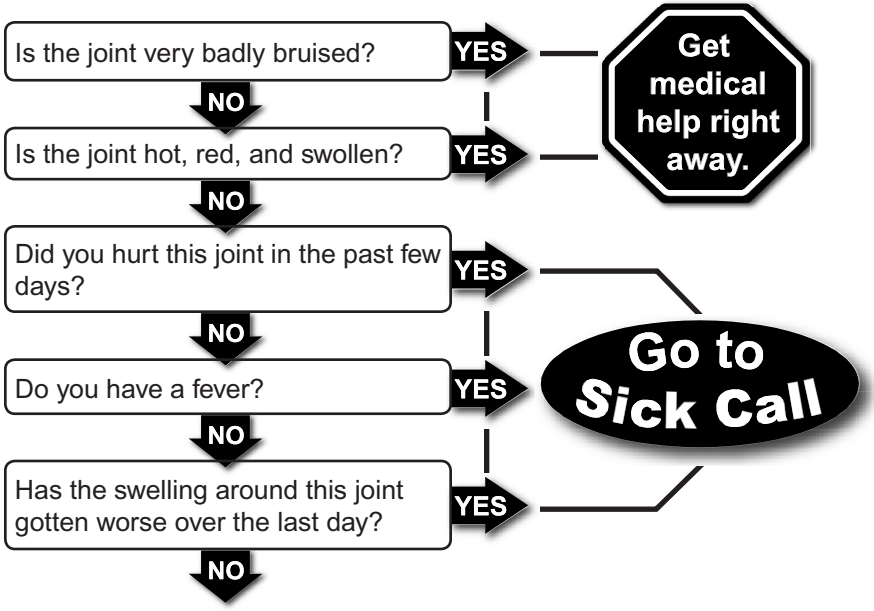
- Wash and dry feet completely at least once a day. Be sure to dry between your toes.
- Keep your socks and shoes in good repair. Make sure your shoes and boots fit right.

- When trimming your toenails, trim straight across. Don't trim the corners because this could make the nail start to grow into your skin.
- When running, wear noncotton socks. Socks made of acrylic, acrylic and polyester, CoolMax, or Thermax pull water away from the skin.

Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Joint Pain

Joints - shoulders, spine, elbows, wrists, hands, hips, knees, ankles or feet - are where our bodies bend. Using a joint too much or in the wrong way can hurt it. You will know a joint is hurt if it is painful, swollen or puffy, stiff, red, bruised, or is warmer than usual. Strains and sprains are the most common cause of joint pain. If one of your joints hurts, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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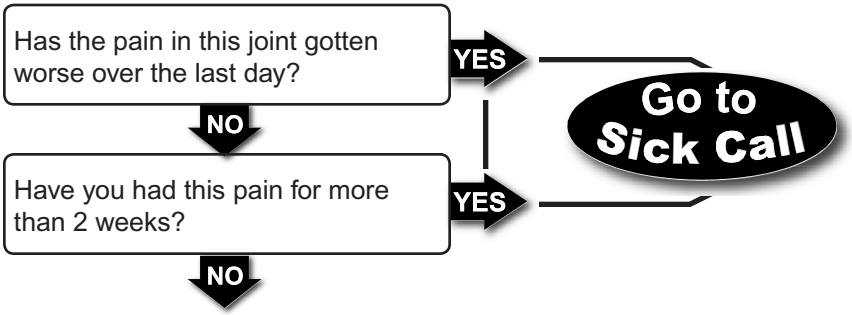
Joint Pain - continued



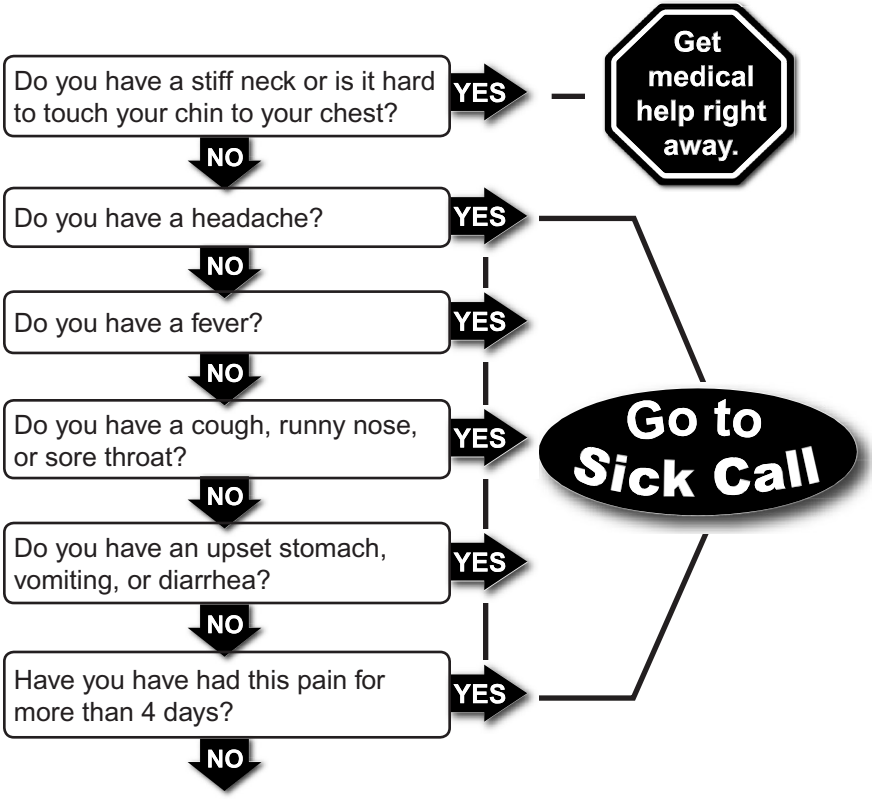
Use Self-Care Measures:
RICE Protocol:

- **R**EST: If possible, rest the injured joint from strenuous activity for 1 to 2 days.
- **I**CE: Put a cold pack on the injured joint for 20 minutes. Repeat every 2 to 3 hours during the first day or two -- especially right after any activity. You can make a cold pack by putting ice in a plastic bag or wrapping ice in a towel. Don't put ice directly on your skin – this can cause ice burns. NEVER USE HEAT.
- **C**OMPRESSION: Elastic sleeves or elastic wraps like Ace bandages around the injured joint help reduce swelling. Don't wrap the elastic too tightly.
- **E**LEVATION: If possible, the injured area should be raised above mid-chest to reduce swelling.
- Use an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen or aspirin as directed to reduce swelling. Acetaminophen is a good pain reliever but will not reduce the swelling.

Go to sick call if the pain continues for more than 2 weeks or if you are having trouble performing your duties. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Muscle Aches

General body aches are usually part of an illness like a cold or the flu. You may feel just plain bad, with aching arms, legs, back, and a headache. On the other hand, using your muscles a lot can also cause muscle aches. If you ache all over, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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Muscle Aches - continued

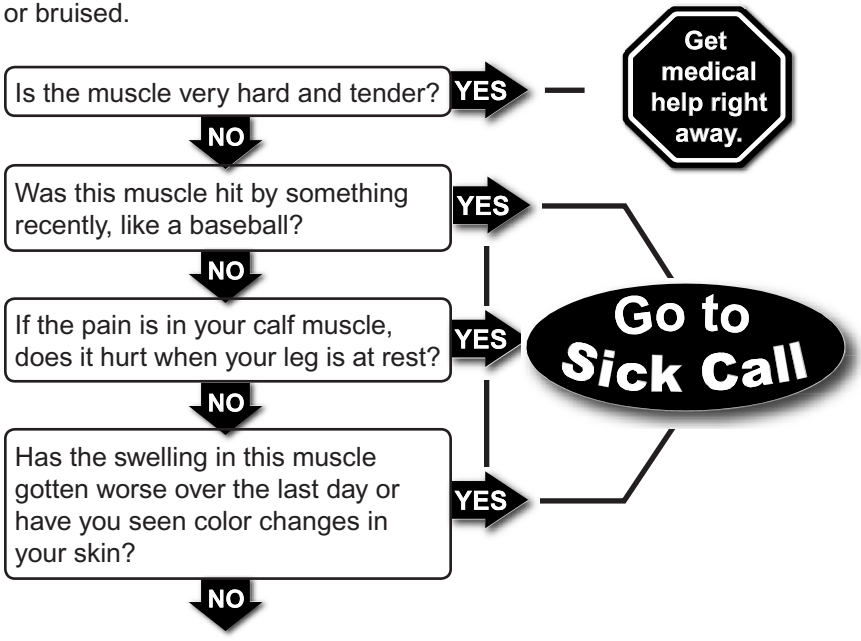
Use Self-Care Measures:

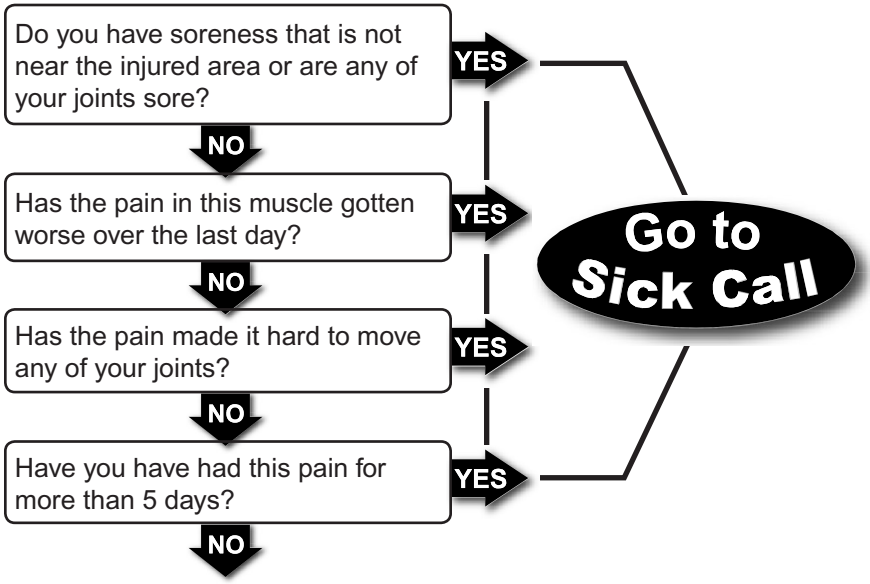
- Use an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or aspirin as directed.
- Put a warm, wrung-out washcloth or towel over the sore area to help the pain.

Go to sick call if the pain lasts longer than 4 days, or if you are having trouble performing your duties. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Muscle Pain and Bruises

Muscle pain happens when you strain or pull a muscle during exercise or other physical activity. Muscle pain and bruises can also be the result of getting hit by something like a baseball. Use this symptom evaluation chart if one of your muscles is swollen, painful, tender to the touch, warm, or bruised.





Use Self-Care Measures:

RICE Protocol:

- **R**EST: If possible, rest the injured area from strenuous activity for 1 to 2 days.
- **I**CE: Put a cold pack on the injured area for 20 minutes. Repeat every 2 to 3 hours during the first day or two – especially immediately after activitiy. You can make a cold pack by putting ice in a plastic bag or wrapping ice in a towel. Don't put ice directly on your skin – this can cause ice burns. DON'T USE HEAT UNLESS DIRECTED.
- **C**OMPRESSION: Elastic sleeves or elastic wraps like Ace bandages around the injured area help reduce swelling. Don't wrap the elastic too tightly.
- **E**LEVATION: If possible, the injured area should be raised above mid-chest to reduce swelling.
- Use an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen or aspirin as directed to help reduce swelling. Acetaminophen is a good pain reliever but will not reduce the swelling.

Continued on next page.

Muscle Pain and Bruises - continued

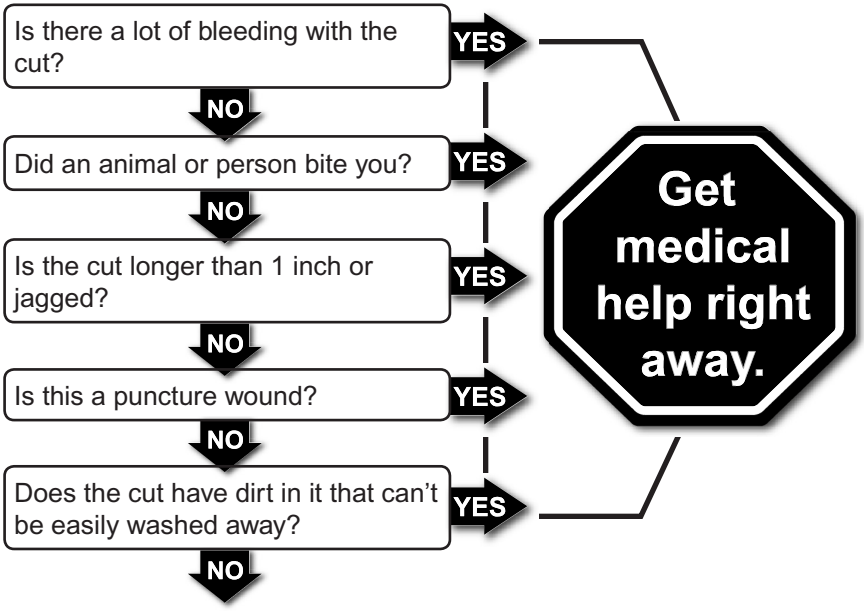
Go to sick call if the pain lasts longer than 5 days, or if you are having trouble performing your duties. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Skin

Cuts, Punctures, or Bites

Puncture wounds are usually caused by sharp, pointed objects like pins, needles, staples, and wires. Puncture wounds have a high risk of infection and should get medical attention. Bites from animals or humans should also get medical attention.

A small, shallow cut to the skin can usually be taken care of with self-care measures. However, larger cuts or cuts that look like they might get infected need medical attention. If your skin gets cut, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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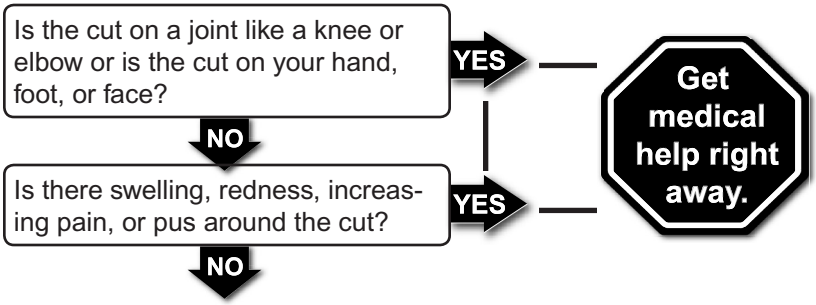
Cuts, Punctures, or Bites - continued



Use Self-Care Measures:

- Rinse the cut with cool water.
- Wash around the cut with soap and water. Try to avoid getting soap into the cut.
- Apply pressure to the cut until the bleeding has stopped.
- Use tweezers dipped in alcohol to remove any dirt or gravel from the cut.
- Leave the cut uncovered unless it rubs against clothing or will get dirty.
- Apply topical antibiotic as directed.
- If needed, cover the cut with a sterile dressing like a Band Aid until it begins to heal.
- Take aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen as directed for pain.

Go to sick call if the cut does not clear up as expected. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

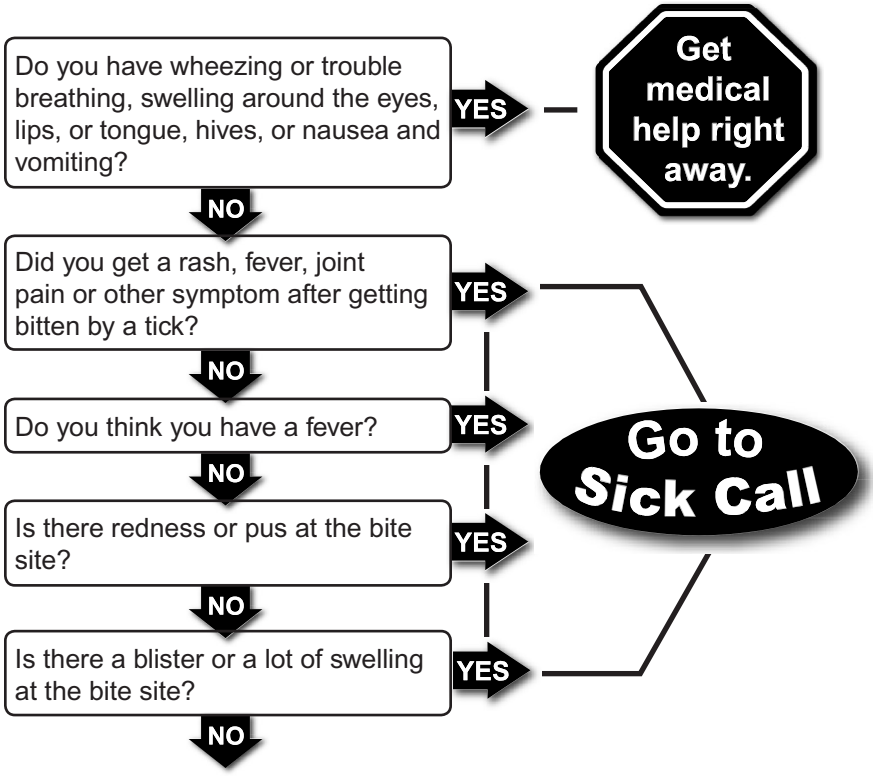
Insect Bites or Stings

Although they may be painful and cause swelling, itching, pain and redness, bug bites or stings may not be serious and self-care measures can be used. However, there are times when bug bites can cause serious medical problems:

Allergy to Bee Sting: A reaction occurs almost immediately after the sting. Symptoms include wheezing or trouble breathing, swelling around the eyes, lips, or tongue, hives, or nausea and vomiting.

Tick Bite: Ticks can carry diseases like Lyme Disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Symptoms can occur anywhere from a week after the bite to two months later. If you get a rash, fever, joint pain or other symptom after getting bitten by a tick, go to Sick Call.

If you have been stung or bitten by a bug, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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Insect Bites or Stings - continued

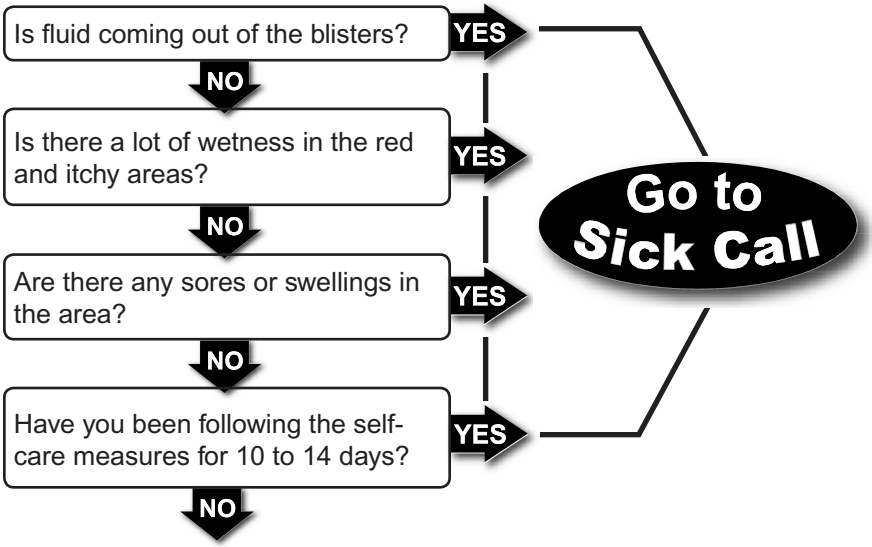
Use Self-Care Measures:

- Remove any stinger or mouthparts left at the bite site.
- Apply Calamine Lotion or hydrocortisone cream as directed.
- Apply cold compress or ice pack.
- To reduce itching, use an over-the-counter antihistamine as directed.

Go to sick call if the symptoms do not clear up in 48 hours. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Jock Itch

Jock itch is a red, itchy rash on the groin and inner thighs. It may also have tiny blisters or dandruff-like scales. Both men and women can get jock itch. Jock itch is made worse by sweating or wearing tight clothing that doesn't breathe. To avoid jock itch, carefully wash and dry your groin area every day. If you think you have jock itch, use this symptom evaluation chart.



Use Self-Care Measures:

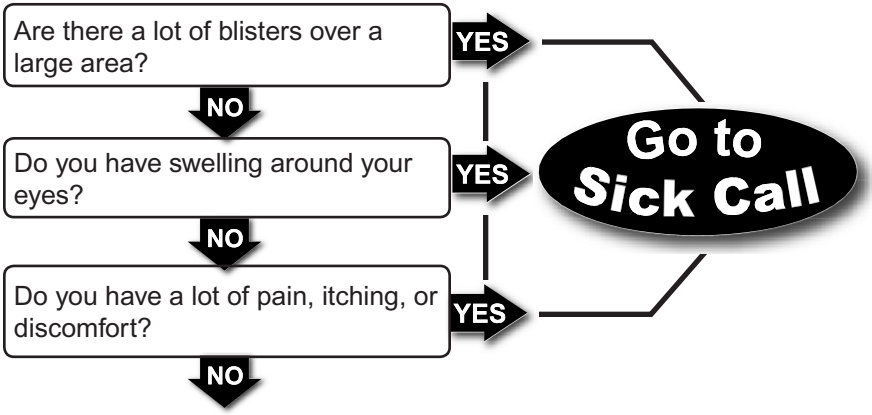
- Wash the groin area and inner thighs with mild soap 2 times a day. Completely dry yourself after washing.
- Wear loose-fitting clothes. Men should wear boxer shorts instead of jockey shorts. Women should wear cotton underpants.
- Apply an over-the-counter antifungal cream as directed.

Go to sick call if the symptoms have not cleared up in 10 to 14 days. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Rash from Poison Ivy/Oak/Sumac

The oil in the leaves of poison ivy can give you a rash. Symptoms include itching, redness, slight swelling, and blisters. These appear 24 to 48 hours after contact with the plant's oil. Blisters can break and ooze fluid. However, fluid from broken blisters cannot spread the rash. The only way to get poison ivy is to get poison ivy oil on your skin.

Keep in mind that the oil from the leaves can get onto your clothing or shoes. Be sure to undress carefully and wash your skin and your clothing if you know you've come in contact with poison ivy. If you think you have a rash from poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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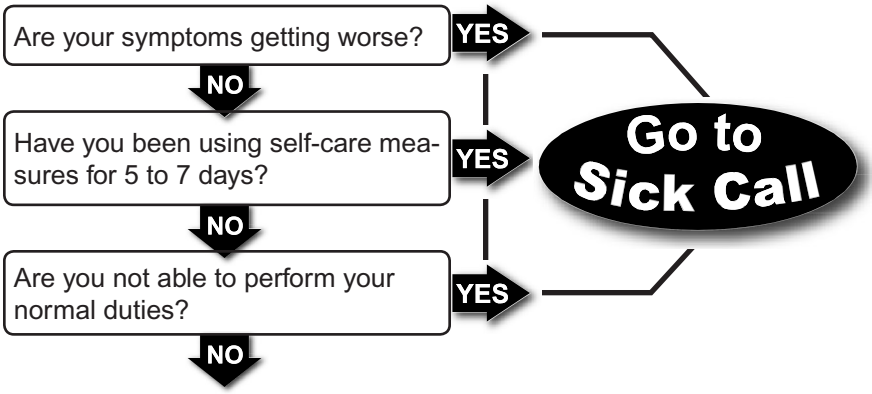
Rash from Poison Ivy/Oak/Sumac - continued



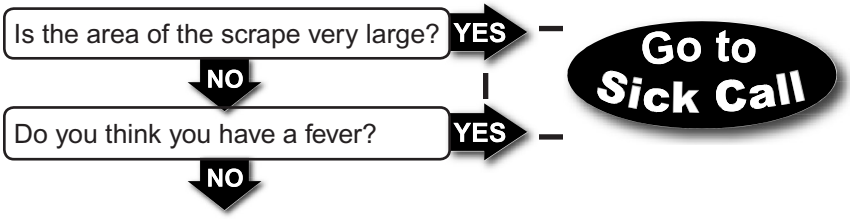
Use Self-Care Measures:

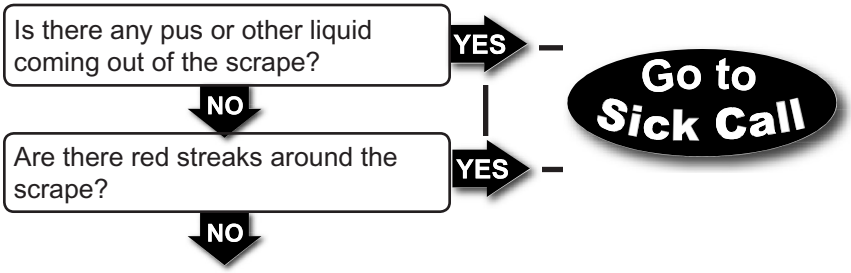
- Apply Calamine Lotion or hydrocortisone cream as directed.
- Take aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen as directed for pain.

Go to sick call if the symptoms do not clear up in 5 to 7 days.
Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Scrapes

Scrapes usually happen when you fall and the top layer of the skin on your hand, elbow or knee is rubbed raw. Scrapes are painful, but usually heal quickly. If you have scraped your skin, use this symptom evaluation chart.





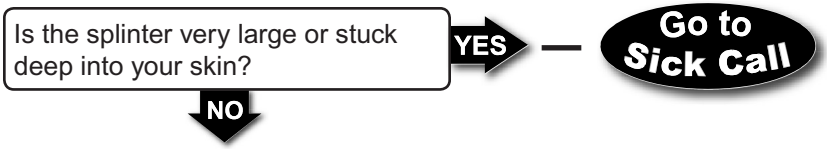
Use Self-Care Measures:

- Rinse the scrape with cool water.
- Wash around the scrape with soap and water. Try to avoid getting soap on the scrape.
- Use tweezers dipped in alcohol to remove any dirt or gravel from the scrape.
- Apply an over-the-counter topical antibiotic as directed.
- Take aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen as directed for pain.
- Keep the scrape covered with a sterile dressing like a Band Aid until it begins to heal.
- An ice pack or cool compress sometimes helps with the pain.

Go to sick call if the scrape does not clear up as expected. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Splinters

A splinter is a sliver of wood or other material that gets stuck under your skin. Most splinters can be treated with self-care measures. If you have a splinter, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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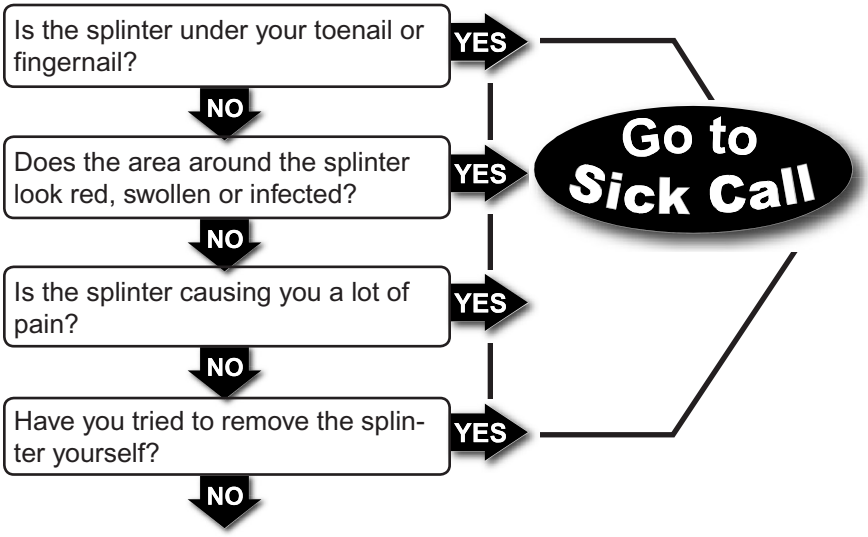
Splinters - continued



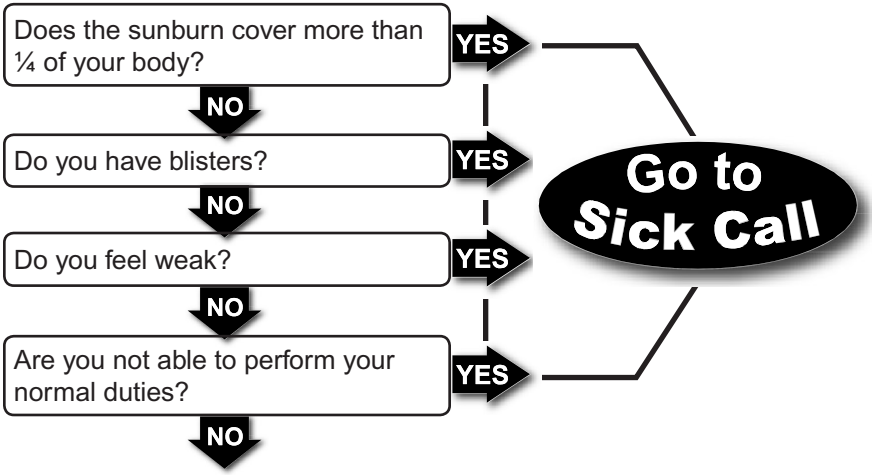
Use Self-Care Measures:

- To avoid infection, keep the area clean.
- Get a pair of tweezers and a needle. Dip the tweezers and needle into rubbing alcohol to clean them.
- Wash your hands.
- Try to grab the splinter with the tweezers. If that doesn't work, lift the splinter with the tip of the needle.
- Don't poke the area too much with the needle – it will just get red and swollen.
- Once the splinter is out, wash the area with soap and water. Use an over-the-counter topical antibiotic and a bandage.
- If a splinter is very small, you may want to wait for it to come out on its own. Keep the area clean.

Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Sunburn

You've just spent time in the sun and now your skin is red, slightly swollen, and painful. Mild sunburn can usually be taken care of with self-care measures. More severe sunburn needs medical treatment. If you have a sunburn, use this symptom evaluation chart.



Use Self-Care Measures:

- Apply Calamine Lotion to the sunburned area as directed.
- Take aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen as directed for pain.

Go to sick call if the symptoms do not clear up in 2 to 3 days.
Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

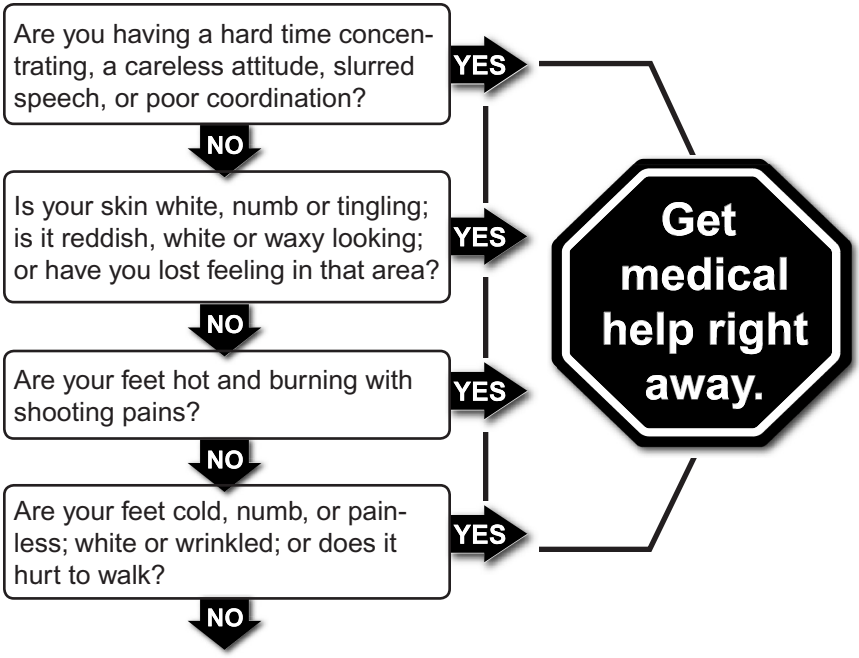
General Symptoms

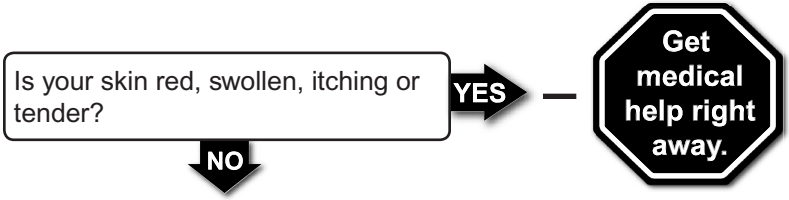
Cold Weather Symptoms

Cold weather injuries can range from mild chapped skin to life-threatening hypothermia. To avoid cold weather injuries, you must be prepared. Being prepared means wearing the proper clothing, keeping yourself dry, eating your meals, and getting good blood flow to all parts of your body.

More importantly, you need to understand that cold weather injuries can sneak up on you. Pay attention to the signs and symptoms – redness, tingling skin, numbness, slurred speech, or poor coordination are all signs that you may be getting a cold weather injury.

If you have been out in the cold and think you have a cold weather injury, use this symptom evaluation chart.





Use Self-Care Measures:

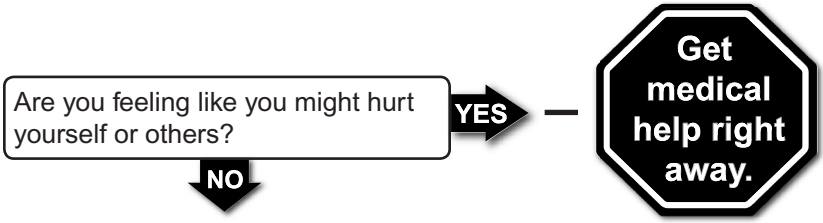
- Never rub an area you think might have cold weather injury – you could make the injury worse. If in doubt, get medical help.
- For chapped skin or windburn, use a lotion or cream on the skin and protect the area from the wind. Use petroleum jelly or lip balm on your lips.

If you have been out in the cold and think you have a cold weather injury, get medical help right away.

Depression, Stress, or Anxiety

Depression is feeling very sad or hopeless. Anxiety is feeling very worried all the time. Stress is feeling pressure to do more than you can cope with. Depression, stress, and anxiety can cause you to feel tired, confused, guilty, or worthless. Depression, stress, or anxiety can cause problems at home or at work. They can even cause physical symptoms such as headache, stomach ache, or diarrhea.

If you feel depressed, stressed, or anxious, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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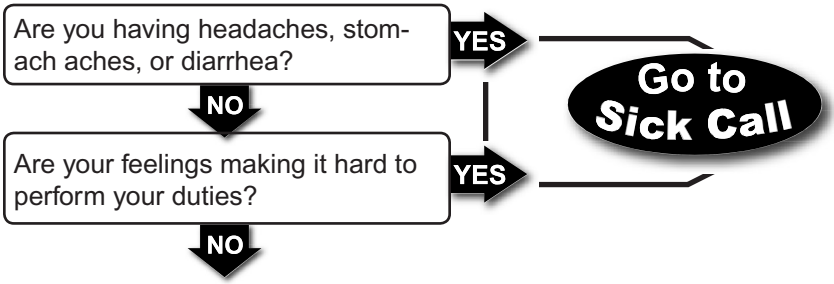
Depression, Stress, or Anxiety - continued



Use Self-Care Measures:

Stay Healthy

- Get enough sleep – 8 hours a night is good for most people.
- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.
- Drink at least 8 cups of water a day.
- Stay physically active.

Learn to Relax

- Learn to relax or meditate. For some this might be praying.
- Take a stress or anger management class.
- Read a good book or do some other hobby to get your mind off of things.
- Work it out - go into work (a temporary but sometimes useful way to cope).

Talk to Someone

Find a "running buddy" – someone in a similar situation that you can talk to. This person could be a co-worker, someone from a different unit, a supervisor you admire, a civilian – anyone you feel comfortable with who is dealing with similar stress or anger. Together, you can work on goals to make your situation better.

Talk to someone about your problems: Spouse, family member, friend, or any of the mental health professionals on post such as:

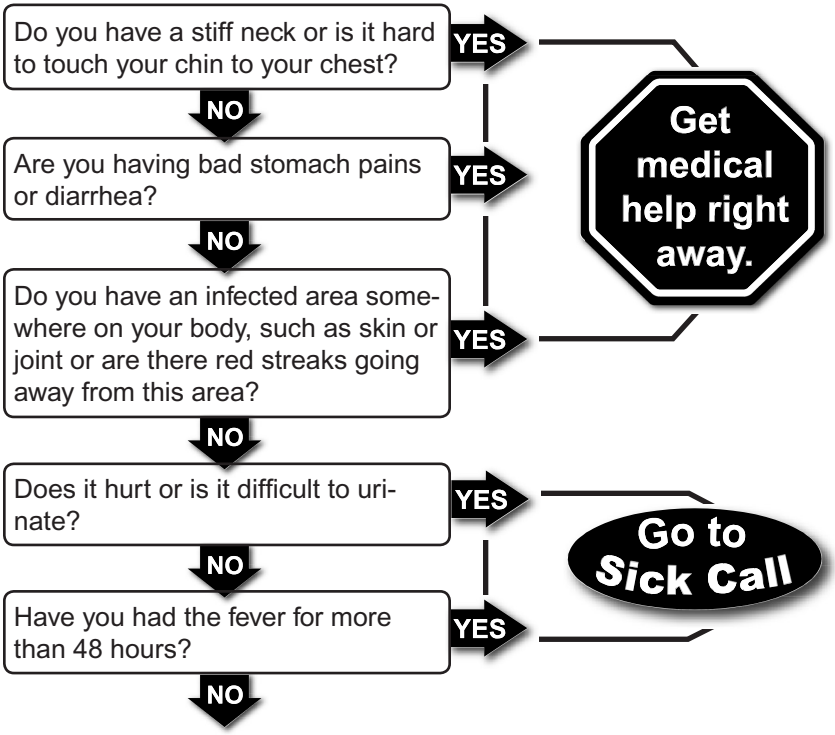
- Counselors, including alcohol and drug counselors
- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Chaplains and spiritual advisors

- Community health nurses
- Doctors and health care workers

<u>If you are feeling like you might hurt yourself or others, seek professional help right away.</u>

Fever or Chills

A fever is one of the ways the body fights off illness. A fever by itself is usually not serious. However, a fever along with other symptoms could point to a problem. If you are hot and sweaty, or hot and chilled, use this symptom evaluation chart.



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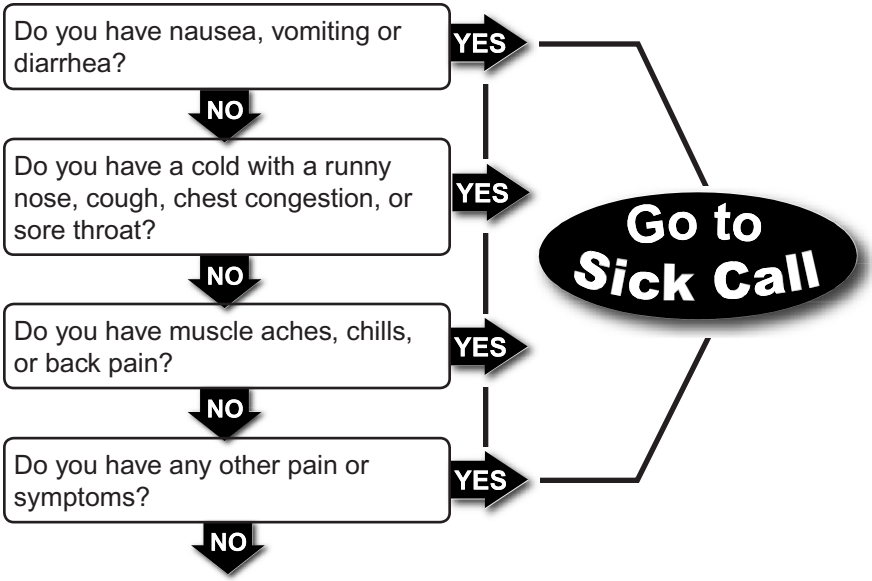
Fever or Chills - continued



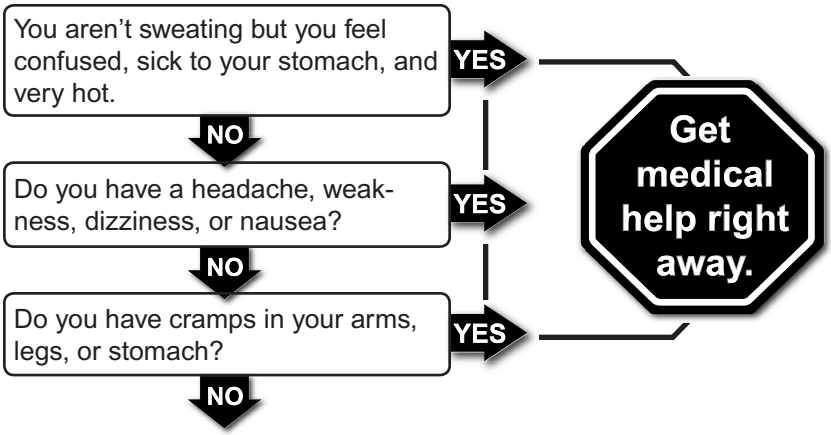
Use Self-Care Measures:

- Drink plenty of water – at least 1 cup an hour. Caffeine-free drinks like fruit juice or ginger ale can also be used.
- Sponge your body with lukewarm water or put a cold, wrung-out washcloth on your forehead.
- Take an over-the counter fever reducer like acetaminophen as directed.

Go to sick call if the fever last longer than 48 hours. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Hot Weather Symptoms

Working or playing outside in hot weather can lead to heat-related injuries. Mild symptoms can usually be taken care of with self-care measures but more severe symptoms need medical treatment. If you have been outside in the heat and don't feel well, use this symptom evaluation chart.



Use Self-Care Measures:

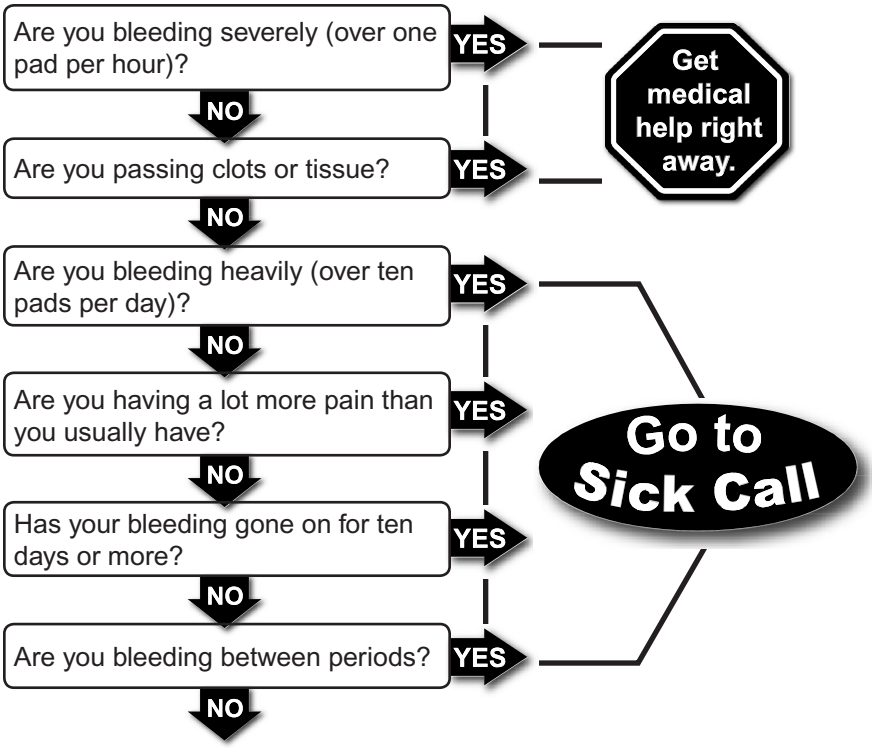
- Notify your chain of command.
- Move into the shade or a cool area.
- Loosen your clothing.
- Drink at least one canteen of cool water. Take small, frequent sips.
- Pour water on your exposed skin and fan yourself.

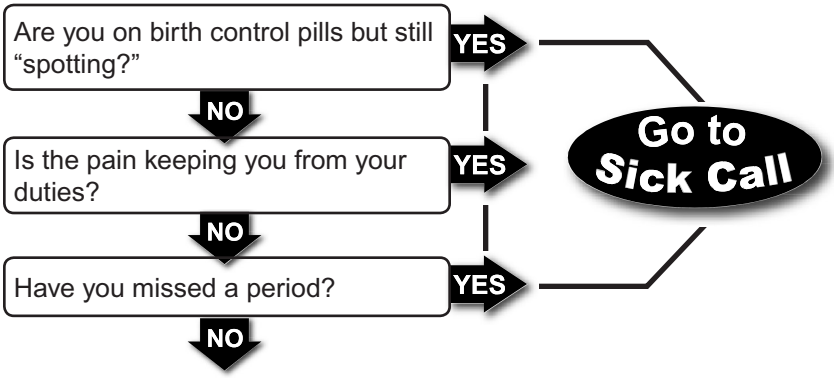
Get medical help if the symptoms do not clear in 30 minutes.

Women's Health

Menstrual Symptoms

As a woman, you know there are symptoms that normally go along with your period. Most come and go on a monthly basis and are not a cause for concern. However, there may be times when the pain or bleeding is out of the ordinary. If you have concerns about your period, use this symptom evaluation chart.





Use Self-Care Measures:

Cramping in your lower stomach is normal during your period.

- To help with cramps, use an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen as directed.
- A heating pad or hot water bottle may relax your muscles and help the pain.
- A regular physical exercise program when you are not cramping may also help.

Premenstrual Syndrome

A week or so before your period, you may get headaches, cramping, feel bloated or cranky, or have trouble sleeping. Here are some suggestions to smooth out those symptoms:

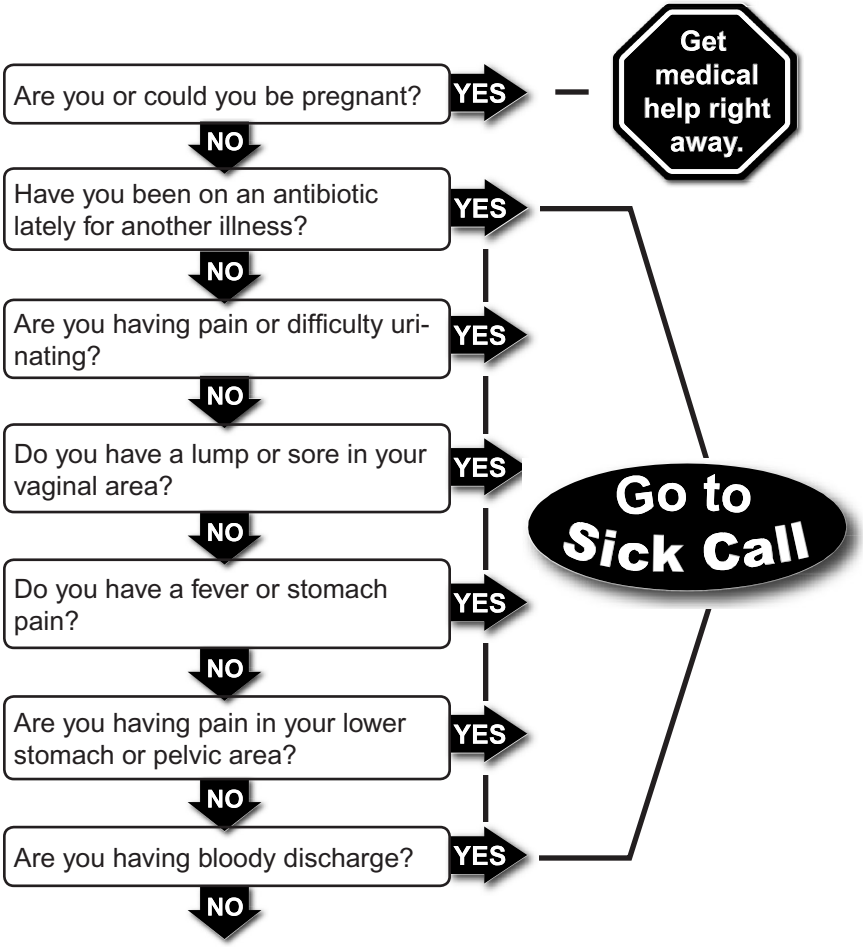
- Cut down on salt and salty foods.
- Cut down on drinks with caffeine.
- Use an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen as directed for headaches.
- Continue your regular exercise program.

If you have a problem with premenstrual syndrome, visit a health care provider.

Go to sick call if you cannot perform your duties. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Vaginal Discharge, Itching, Irritation, or Pain

In most women, it is normal to have a little bit of odorless discharge from the vagina. But if the discharge is out of the ordinary, or if you have itching, irritation, or pain, use this symptom evaluation chart.



Use Self-Care Measures:

- Use an over-the-counter medication such as clotrimazole as directed.
- Wear cotton underwear and keep the area as dry as possible.
- During your period, change tampons and sanitary napkins frequently. Change your tampon at least three times a day.
- Don't wash the area too much or too roughly. Don't use a lot of soap.
- Use a condom during vaginal intercourse until the problem has cleared up.

If the problem does not clear up as expected, go to sick call. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.

Appendix A

Over-the-Counter Medication Usage Guidelines and Side Effects

As you have seen in this book, you are responsible for your health. An important part of self-care is the use of approved medicines. For some medicines, you need a prescription from a doctor. Other medicines can be picked up at a pharmacy without a prescription. These are called "over-the-counter" or "OTC" medications.

Both prescription and over-the-counter medicines help treat medical problems. The proper use of all medicine is your responsibility. To get the most benefit from any medicine, you must get instructions on how to use it and follow those instructions.

The following are basic questions that you should ask before taking any medications:

- What is name of this medication?
- What is it supposed to do?
- How should I take this medication?
- When should I take this medication?
- How long should I take this medication?
- Should any foods, drinks, or other medications be avoided?
- Should any activities be avoided?
- What are the possible side effects and what should I do if they occur?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?

Frequently Asked Questions

What are "over-the-counter" medications?

Over-the-counter (OTC) medications are medicines that soldiers can normally get from the pharmacy without a prescription. These OTCs can be used to treat minor medical symptoms such as a blister or sore throat. These medications are considered safe and effective when used as directed.

Is there a difference between "Generic" and "Brand" name medications?
When a manufacturer receives approval by the Food and Drug Administration to market a new prescription or OTC medication, the company will distribute that medication under a specific "brand" name. For every "brand" name for a medication, there is a universal "generic" name for that same medication. For example, acetaminophen is the generic name for the brand name Tylenol. Once the manufacturer has lost the patent rights to market a specific drug, then other pharmaceutical manufacturers can make the drug and sell it under its generic name. The FDA requires that the generic medication contain the same active ingredients as the brand name medication. Generic medications are usually less expensive than brand name medications.

How should I use OTC medications?
All OTC medications come with instructions for use. It is important that you understand the directions for use before you leave the pharmacy.

How should I store my medicines?
The best place to store medications is in a cool, dry place and out of direct sunlight. Heat and moisture are bad for many medications, which is why the bathroom is the worst place to keep medications. In the field, do your best to keep your medicines in a cool, dry place. Use a "zip-lock" plastic bag to keep at least some moisture away from your medication.

What should I do if the medication I'm taking is not helping my problem?
If the medication is not helping your problem in the expected time period or if your condition gets worse, you need to return to Sick Call.

Will vitamins, herbal-type medications, dietary supplements, or performance-enhancing drugs affect me while taking OTCs?
CAUTION: Soldiers have had bad reactions while taking these types of products, whether with an OTC or not. You should talk to your health care provider before taking any product that is not approved by the pharmacy or prescribed by a physician.

More information about dietary supplements, herbal-type medications, and performance-enhancing drugs can be found at the USACHPPM website (http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil).

Where can I obtain additional information on medications?
Your military pharmacist and healthcare team members are your primary source of medication information. Additional resources for medication specifically related to the military can be obtained on the USACHPPM website (http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil).

Be cautious of the source of medication information, especially on the Internet. Your best bet is to ask your pharmacist for good Internet sources of information.

Medication and You

- Always keep a list of all your medications. This should include prescription medicines, OTCs, and dietary supplements.
- Tell your health care providers about any drug allergies.
- Read the labels on all medications.
- Check the expiration date of any medication before using it.
- If a medication looks different than what you usually take, ask your pharmacist.
- Ask questions: It is your right and responsibility.

OTC Medications – Common Side Effects and Cautions

The following lists some of the OTC medications found in this guide. The side effects and cautions do not cover all potential issues with these medications. A more in-depth list of side effects or further explanation may be obtained from your Army Pharmacist. As with all medications, it is important that you:

- Take medications as directed.
- Not exceed the recommended doses.
- Read the label on all medications.
- Inform your healthcare provider of any problems.

Acetaminophen
High doses and constant use may cause liver damage. Alcoholic beverages increase the risk of liver damage.

Antidiarrheal
Some of the medications (loperamide) used for diarrhea may cause drowsiness and dizziness – avoid driving and other tasks which require alertness. Other medications for this condition (Kaopectate) may interfere with other medications you are taking – ask your pharmacist.

Antihistamines
Most medications used to treat a runny nose have the potential of causing drowsiness and dizziness. Avoid operating motor vehicles or machinery until you know how the medicine affects you.

Aspirin
Aspirin can cause stomach upset. This medication is best taken with 8 ounces of water or milk to ensure passage into your stomach. It can also be taken with food to help minimize any stomach upset. If you have stomach ulcers, consult a health care provider before taking aspirin. Aspirin should not be taken for a long time unless specifically directed by a health care provider. This medication is particularly sensitive to moisture – if possible, store aspirin in a cool, dry place.

Clotrimazole
This skin medication may cause some irritation or sensitivity. Any reaction should be reported to your health care provider.

Decongestants
These medications (pseudoepehrine) have the potential of causing dry mouth or nervousness. It is best to take the last dose of the day 2 to 3 hours before bedtime. If you have high blood pressure, consult a health care provider or pharmacist before taking this medication.

Ibuprofen
This medication is best taken with 8 ounces of water or milk to ensure passage into your stomach. It can also be taken with food to help

minimize any stomach upset. This medication can make you less alert – use caution until you know how the medicine affects you. Ibuprofen should not be taken for a long time unless specifically directed by a health care provider.

Appendix B

Resource List

AR 40-3, Chapter 11, Pharmacy Management
AR 600-9 Army Weight Control Program
AR 600-85 Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Program
AR 600-63 Army Health Promotion
AR 608-1 Army Community Service Center
AR 608-18 Army Family Advocacy Program
DA PAM 600-24 Suicide Prevention and Psychological Autopsy
DA PAM 600-63-7 The Army Health Promotion Program – Fit To Win – Antitobacco Use
DA PAM 600-63-8 The Army Health Promotion Program – Fit To Win – Substance Abuse Prevention
DA PAM 600-63-10 The Army Health Promotion Program – Fit To Win – Stress Management
DA PAM 600-63-11 The Army Health Promotion Program – Fit To Win – Dental Health
DA PAM 600-64-14 The Army Health Promotion Program – Your Fit to Win Handbook
FM 21-10 Field Hygiene and Sanitation
FM 21-11 First Aid for Soldiers
FM 21-20 Physical Fitness Training
FM 3-25.20 Physical Readiness Training (Draft)
HSC PAM 40-7-21 Algorithm-Directed Troop Medical Care

American Podiatric Medical Association – Foot Care
American Sleep Disorders Association – Sleep Hygiene Practices
Chemical Splash First Aid (Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program, USACHPPM)
The Dark Side of Sunlight by Stephen P. Wengraitis (Laser/Optical Radiation Program, USACHPPM)
Drug Information Handbook, 8th Edition, American Pharmaceutical Association, 2001
Female Soldier Readiness: A Leader's Guide (Madigan Army Medical Center and I Corps, Fort Lewis, Washington)

Injury Control for Physically Active Men and Women by Joseph Knapik, Sc.D. (USACHPPM Directorate of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance) and Rebecca McCollam, MSA (Army Physical Fitness Research Institute, U.S. Army War College)

Intendedness of pregnancy among active duty women in the U.S. Army. (Custer, M. - 1998. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin.)

Memorandum for Soldiers of C Company 16th Ordnance Battalion, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Subject: Policy Letter #29, Safety

Pharmacist's Drug Handbook, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, 2001

Mosquito and Tick Repellants Fact Sheet (USACHPPM Entomological Sciences Program)

Power Performance: The Nutrition Connection. (Military Nutrition Division of the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine)

Protect Yourself from Tick-Borne Diseases (USACHPPM Entomological Sciences Program)

Protecting the Eye in Sports (Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program, USACHPPM)

Skin and Scalp Diseases - Just the Facts (USACHPPM)

Suicide Prevention – A Resource Manual for the U.S. Army (USACHPPM)

Sun Protection – Questions and Facts for Soldiers (Laser/Optical Radiation Program, USACHPPM)

Ten Commandments of Eye Safety (Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program, USACHPPM)

Ultraviolet (UV) Radiation Hazards (Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program, USACHPPM)

Tick Removal (Entomological Sciences Program, USACHPPM)

Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases – Just the Facts (Entomological Sciences Program, USACHPPM)

Unintended pregnancy among female soldiers presenting for prenatal care at Madigan Army Medical Center. (Clark, J. B., Holt, V. L., & Miser, F. - 1998. Military Medicine, 163, 444-448.)

The unintended pregnancy prevention program. (Flynn, D. - 2000. The Uniformed Family Physician, Winter, 20-21.)

Unplanned pregnancy among active-duty Army females as a readiness issue. (Borsay-Trindle, L. A., Pass, C. M., & Gilzean, S. M. - 1991. Military Medicine, 156, 82-86.)
Wellness for Senior Leaders – Taking Care of Yourself: A Proactive Approach (Army Physical Fitness Research Institute)
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion – Food Guide Pyramid
U.S. Surgeon General Report on Physical Fitness (1996)

Subject Matter Experts

Audiologist (Hearing Conservation Program, USACHPPM)
Chaplain (Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness, USACHPPM)
Dentist (Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness, USACHPPM)
Health Educator (Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness, USACHPPM)
Nutritionist (Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness, USACHPPM)
Optometrist Consultant (Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program, USACHPPM)
Pharmacy Advisor (Directorate of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance, USACHPPM)
Physical Therapist (Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness, USACHPPM)
Physical Science Technician (Laser/Optical Radiation Program, USACHPPM)
Research Physiologist (Directorate of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance, USACHPPM)
Social Worker (USACHPPM Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness)

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