

Diagnosis

- Upper respiratory tract infections or “the common cold” are caused by viruses and present with symptoms such as rhinorrhea, sneezing, sinus congestion, sore throat, cough, low-grade fever, headache, and fatigue.
- The common cold occurs throughout the year.
- The color of nasal discharge does not differentiate a viral infection from a bacterial one.
- The physical examination should focus on identifying alternative diagnoses:
 - Acute diagnoses that could change management, such as otitis media, streptococcal pharyngitis, or pneumonia
 - Exacerbations of chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or heart failure
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