



## Symptom Relief for Colds and Viral Infections

During cold and flu season, most colds, sore throats, runny noses, and fatigue are caused by viruses. Antibiotics are not helpful in treating these conditions as viruses are made up and replicate in a different way than bacteria, making antibiotics ineffective. Many times, viruses just need to run their course, but supportive treatments such as over-the-counter medications, rest and staying hydrated can help you feel better. Remember to wash your hands often to avoid spreading illness!

Specific symptoms	Home remedies	Over-the-counter medications
<b>Stuffy nose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a room humidifier</li> <li>• Saline nasal spray or nasal flushes</li> </ul>	<b>Decongestant:</b> opens up the nasal passages
<b>Runny nose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For sore nose, use petroleum</li> </ul>	<b>Antihistamine:</b> dries up mucus
<b>Dry cough</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a room humidifier</li> <li>• Gargle with warm salt water</li> </ul>	<b>Cough suppressant:</b> helps stop cough
<b>Moist cough</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink more water</li> </ul>	<b>Expectorant:</b> thins mucus, makes it easier to cough up
<b>Sore throat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gargle with warm salt water</li> <li>• Drink tea</li> </ul>	<b>Throat lozenges:</b> soothes throat *Do not give to children under 10 years old
<b>Fever / muscle aches or ear ache</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cool compress on the forehead for fever</li> <li>• Warm compress on sore muscles or ear</li> </ul>	<b>Analgesic:</b> pain reliever *Do not give aspirin to children under 18 years old
<b>Itchy, watery eyes/sneezing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid things you are allergic to or that cause irritation</li> </ul>	<b>Antihistamine:</b> dries watery eyes and may relieve itchy eyes

*Treatments above for adults only.*

## Medication recommendations:

Medications can help your symptoms and get you back on your feet. Your provider suggests the following medications:

- A prescription inhaler** for wheezing, which will help open up your airways and breathe easier
- A prescription for an **inhaled steroid inhaler**, which can help with airway swelling and wheezing
- Acetaminophen** (Tylenol®) for pain, inflammation and to lower fever
- Ibuprofen** for pain and discomfort, inflammation, and fever if greater than 101°F.  
Take the following dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- Honey** for coughing in children older than 1-year-old.  
Take the following dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- Cough or cold medications** if older than 4-6 years old for relief from a cold.  
Take the following dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- Cough drops/lozenges** if older than 4 years old for sore throat.  
Take the following dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- Decongestants** (pseudoephedrine) including Sudafed® and others shrink swollen blood vessels and tissues and relieve congestion
- Antihistamine** to relieve runny nose, sneezing, itchy or water eyes, and nose or throat itching (may cause sleepiness).
- Guaifenesin** (such as Robitussin®, Mucofen®, Mucinex®, Humibid LA® or Humibid-e®) to help thin the mucus and help it drain. Take the following dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dextromethorphan** for a cough suppressant, including Delsym® and Robitussin®

## Go back to your doctor if you have:

- Fever higher than 100.4 °F
- Cough with bloody mucus
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Symptoms that last more than 3 weeks – if it's just the cough, wait a couple of weeks longer

## References:

1. Get Smart Campaign, [cdc.gov/getsmart](https://www.cdc.gov/getsmart), 9/26/17
2. Johns Hopkins Medicine, [hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/pediatrics/upper\\_respiratory\\_infection\\_uri\\_or\\_common\\_cold](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/pediatrics/upper_respiratory_infection_uri_or_common_cold), 9/25/17.
3. Cleveland Clinic, [my.clevelandclinic.org/-/scassets/files/org/head-neck/sinus-re-sources/4-common-cold.ashx?la=en](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/-/scassets/files/org/head-neck/sinus-re-sources/4-common-cold.ashx?la=en), 9/25/17.
4. [familydoctor.org](https://familydoctor.org), Acute Bronchitis, 9/25/17