

# Treating the Common Cold in Children

## What do I do if my child has a cold?

Most colds don't cause serious illness and will get better over time. Cold symptoms can be treated with some over-the-counter remedies, although some over-the-counter treatments shouldn't be used in young children. Always talk to your doctor before giving your child over-the-counter treatments.

## What over-the-counter treatments are helpful in children?

- Buckwheat honey: Eases cough, but shouldn't be used in children younger than one year
- Nasal saline spray: Helps sore throat, runny nose, and stuffy nose
- *Pelargonium sidoides* (geranium) extract (one brand: Umcka Coldcare): Eases cough and can help your child breathe better through the nose
- Vapor rub: Eases cough, but your child may not like the strong smell
- Zinc sulfate syrup: Decreases how long your child has cold symptoms, but it may cause a bad taste in the mouth and upset your child's stomach

## What treatments are not helpful in children?

- Antibiotics
- *Echinacea purpurea*
- Over-the-counter cough and cold medicines

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### Notes:

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**This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.**

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