

Treating the Common Cold in Children

What should 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 certain over-the-counter medicines, but some of these should not be used in young children. Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist before giving your child over-the-counter cold medicine.

What treatments are helpful for children?

- Over-the-counter pain medicines such as acetaminophen (one brand: Children's Tylenol) and ibuprofen (one brand: Children's Motrin) can help with fever and discomfort. Refer to the package insert for dosing instructions.
- Honey helps with cough, but it shouldn't be used in children younger than one year.
- Saline nose spray helps a runny or stuffy nose.
- An herbal medicine called *Pelargonium sidoides* (one brand: Umcka Coldcare) may help with

cough and can help your child breathe better through the nose.

- Menthol rub (one brand: Vick's VapoRub) helps with cough and can help your child breathe better through the nose. But it has a strong smell that some children don't like. It can be used for children two years and older.

What treatments are not helpful for children?

- Antibiotics are not helpful because they don't kill viruses. Cold symptoms are almost always caused by viruses.
- Codeine
- Echinacea (ek-eh-NAY-shuh)
- Over-the-counter cough and cold medicines
- Steam
- Steroid nose sprays (one brand: Flonase)
- Vitamin D

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