

Health Tips

COUGHS AND COLDS IN KIDS

The first snow flurries have fallen, the temperature has dropped, and we're stuck inside where the possibility of germs and colds are everywhere. Advocate Hope Children's Hospital offers parents these tips for treating common cold symptoms. Generally, offer your child fluid frequently to prevent dehydration, allow your child to get adequate rest and sleep, and be sure to call your doctor if you have medicine questions, your child has a fever for more than 5 days, cough and congestion last more than 10 days, or if you have any other concerns.

To relieve a stuffy nose and congestion

- Use a humidifier in your child's room, and clean the humidifier often. A warm bath also may help.
- Use warm water or saline nose drops to thin mucus. Place 1-3 drops in nostrils & wait one minute. Older children then may find it easier to blow their nose. For infants & young children, use a suction bulb to suction each nostril.
- Apply petroleum jelly around nostrils to protect them from irritation.
- Liquid decongestant medicine is not recommended & can have side effects, see below.

To relieve a cough and sore throat

- Cough drops, lozenges, or corn syrup may help soothe the throat. Do not give cough drops to children younger than 4 years because they could choke on them.
- Drinking warm liquids such as chicken broth or hot chocolate may also be soothing.
- Cough suppressant medicine should be avoided, as coughing helps clear the lungs, see below.

Fever

- Use Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen for fevers, headaches, or muscle aches. These medicines are sold in both infant & child concentrations. Ibuprofen should not be used for infants less than 6 months of age.
- Read the label carefully to determine the proper concentration & dose for your child.
- Always use the measuring tool that came with the medicine, or a proper medicine syringe and/or medicine cup. Never use a common kitchen spoon to measure and give medicine.

Cough, Decongestant, and cold medicines

- The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends that cough & cold medications not be given to children younger than 2 years because of the risk of life-threatening side effects.
- Current studies question the safety & effectiveness of decongestants & cough suppressants in children, so check with your pediatrician before giving these medicines.
- Also do not give children two medicines with the same active ingredients. You can easily and unintentionally double a child's dose.
- Finally, never call medicine candy.

For more information call **1-800-3-ADVOCATE**
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