

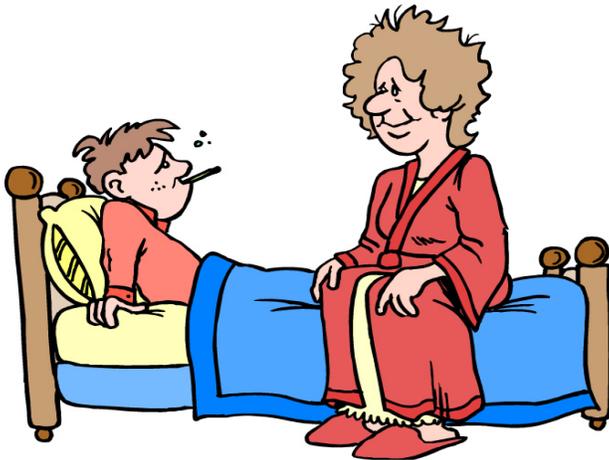
OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

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All-Natural Cold Relief for Children

It's frustrating to watch your child suffer with a cold, and it can be tempting to reach for cold medicine. But recent research reveals that children's cold medications pose serious health threats — and are not even effective.

Your doctor at Hickory Chiropractic Clinic teaches patients that colds are a normal, natural, and possibly even necessary, part of childhood. By fighting off colds, your youngster's immune system builds strength. Your doctor at Hickory Chiropractic Clinic encourages parents to avoid children's cold medications whenever it is safe to do so, and focus on prevention and all-natural symptom relief.



Dangers of Pediatric Cold Medications

For years, researchers have raised grave concerns about the safety and efficacy of pediatric cough and cold medicine. However, it wasn't until the past year that these concerns became widely known.

One study reported that during 2004 to 2005, an estimated 1,519 children under the age of 2 were treated in US emergency departments for adverse events, including overdoses, associated with cough and cold medications. Alarmingly, the study concluded that "the dosages at which cough and cold medications can cause illness or death in children aged [less than] 2 years are not known." (*Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2007;56:1-4.)

An earlier report found that over-the-counter cough medicines for youngsters are not only potentially harmful, but they're also ineffective. "According to the limited data that exist, there is not any evidence that over-the-counter cough and cold medicines are effective in children." (*Curr Opin Pediatr* 2006;18:184-8.)

Finally the makers of all over-the-counter oral cough and cold medicines for infants announced that they were pulling those products off the market.

Federal health advisors also warn that over-the-counter cough and cold medicines shouldn't be used in children younger than 6 years of age.

Doctors of chiropractic are concerned

about the dangers and overuse of both over-the-counter cold medications and antibiotics. As long as it is safe to do so, chiropractors recommend allowing the immune system do its job by letting the cold run its course. In the meantime, there are numerous all-natural ways to make your child comfortable. Read on for details.

Note: Always contact your health-care provider if a baby under 3 months old is sick, even with a common cold.

Easing Children's Cold Symptoms Naturally

Scientific research clearly illustrates that cold medications are not the answer to relieving childhood cold symptoms. And, since the common cold is caused by a virus, antibiotics (which fight bacteria, not viruses) are not effective. But there are still ways to provide your child relief, without resorting to drugs. Try these all-natural tactics:

Maintain regular chiropractic checkups

When your child has a cold, keeping his or her appointments with your doctor at Hickory Chiropractic Clinic will speed recovery and prevent future bouts with the common cold. Numerous studies reveal that regular chiropractic care keeps a child's immune system in optimal condition and, therefore, better equipped to fight off colds. For example, one study concluded: "The results suggest that intensive chiropractic care (i.e., more than seven visits per year and more than one year of care) increased resistance to the common childhood diseases." (*J Chiro Res* 1989;70-77.)

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Another analysis looked at blood levels of specific immune markers called polymorphonuclear neutrophils, or PMNs. Fifteen minutes after receiving a chiropractic adjustment, PMN levels increased significantly, compared with levels immediately prior to adjustment and levels at 30 and 45 minutes post-adjustment (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 1992;15:83-9).

Clear the nose

Drip saline in the baby's nose. Saline drops are available at your local pharmacy. After administering the drops, use a bulb syringe to clear your baby's nose. First squeeze the bulb to expel all air. Then place the top about ¼ to ½ inch into your baby's nostril and point it toward the back of the nose. Once in place, release the bulb so it can suction the mucus, then dispense of the collected mucus. This is especially important for newborns, who breathe almost exclusively through their noses.

Humidify the air

Run a vaporizer or humidifier in your baby's room. Or run hot water in the shower, then sit in the steamy bathroom (not in the shower) with the baby. If using a humidifier, avoid mold by changing the water daily and adhering to the manufacturer's cleaning instructions. Also aim the mist away from the baby's crib, or it will dampen the bedding.

Boost fluid intake

If you are breastfeeding, nurse your baby more frequently. He or she will benefit from the additional hydration, as well as the natural antiviral agents in breast milk. For older babies or children, try chicken soup or chamomile tea. For children over 1 year old, try warm water or tea with lemon and honey (do not give honey to children under 1 year of age).

Elevate the head

Keep your baby upright as much as possible. Also consider placing a pillow under the head end of the crib mattress (never put a pillow on top of the mattress because it is a suffocation hazard).

Focus on prevention

The ideal way to get some sniffle-free time this winter? Stop colds before they start. Cold viruses are spread from one person to another by hand contact, coughing and sneezing. Make hand washing a habit in your house, teach kids to sneeze and cough into a tissue or the crook of their arm (never into their hands) and avoid exposure to sick friends and relatives.

Chill out

Psychological stress has also been linked to the common cold. Investigators at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh inoculated 276 people with the common cold virus. Subjects who reported high levels of chronic stress had a much greater chance of developing a full-blown cold, compared with less-stressed individuals (*Health Psychology* 1988;17:214-23). How can you keep your kids from "stressing out?" Talk to them — ask direct questions regarding their feelings about potential stressors such as schoolwork, relationships with peers and family issues.

Honey for your honeys

One remedy to try for older babies or children's coughs: honey. (However, childhood health organizations advise never to give honey to children under the age of 1 due to the risk of infantile botulism.)

One study in the journal *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* found honey to be **more** effective than cough medicine or no treatment for children's coughs.

The study looked at 105 children aged 2 to 18 years with upper respiratory tract infections, nocturnal symptoms and illness duration of seven days or less. Researchers gave the children either honey, honey-flavored dextromethorphan (DM) (a drug used in over-the-counter cough suppressants) or no treatment before bed.

Based on parental surveys, researchers reported that "significant differences in symptom improvement were detected between treatment groups, with honey consistently scoring the best

and no treatment scoring the worst." The researchers also found that "comparison of honey with DM revealed no significant differences." (*Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 2007;161:1140-6.)

Note: Never feed honey to children under 12 months old due to the risk of botulism.

Zinc sulfate

Another study in the journal *Pediatrics International* looked at 150 children with cold symptoms who received either oral zinc containing zinc sulfate or placebo. The researchers concluded that zinc sulfate "appears to be effective in reducing the severity of the cold symptoms in healthy children." (*Pediatr Int* 2007;49:842-7.)

Note: Check with your doctor of chiropractic before giving any supplement to youngsters.

Antioxidants

A wealth of research associates antioxidants with disease prevention. Ask the doctor for sources of antioxidants appropriate for your child's age group.

Note: You know your child best. If he or she is exhibiting any unusual symptoms or acting particularly sick or "off," don't hesitate to call your health-care provider.



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