



Over-the-counter prescription for viral infections

Viral infections can include:

- Colds
- Flu
- Most coughs
- Most bronchitis
- Runny noses

How do I feel better?

- Drink fluids, but avoid caffeine and alcohol. Water is nature's best way to clear mucus.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Increase the humidity in your home or use a humidifier.
- Don't smoke.
- Use saline nose drops/spray.
- Place a cool mist humidifier in the room.

Antibiotics do not help if you have a viral infection

Taking antibiotics for viral infections will not:

- Cure the infection
- Keep other individuals from catching the illness
- Help you feel better

Medication recommendations:

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

- Beta-agonist inhaler** for wheezing – will be a prescription from your doctor
- High-dose, episodic inhaled corticosteroids** for wheezing but not as a preventive therapy – will be a prescription from your doctor
- Acetaminophen** (commonly called “Tylenol®”) for pain, reduce inflammation, decrease the discomfort, or lower your fever
- Ibuprofen** can be more effective for pain, reducing inflammation, decreasing the discomfort, or lowering your fever if it’s greater than 101°F at the dosage of: _____
- Honey** for coughing in children older than 1-year-old
- Cough drops/lozenges** if older than 4 years old for sore throat
- Cough or cold medications** if older than 4-6 years old for relief from a cold: _____
- Antihistamine** for helping some viral symptoms, but could make your child sleepy
- Oral decongestants or pseudoephedrine** including Sudafed® and others – watch for the “-D” at the end which suggests it contains a decongestant
- Guaifenesin** helps thin the mucus and can help thin thick discolored drainage. Includes Robitussin®, Mucofen®, Mucinex®, Humibid LA® or Humibid-e®
- Dextromethorphan** as a cough suppressant

When to go back to your doctor:

- 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, 9/26/17
2. Johns Hopkins Medicine, hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/pediatrics/upper_respi-ratory_infection_uri_or_common_cold, 9/25/17.
3. Cleveland Clinic, my.clevelandclinic.org/-/scassets/files/org/head-neck/sinus-resources/4-common-cold.ashx?la=en, 9/25/17.
4. familydoctor.org, Acute Bronchitis, 9/25/17