

# Caring for your child's Cold, Flu, RSV or COVID Symptoms



**Cardinal Pediatrics**  
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**Unfortunately, there's no cure for the common cold.** Antibiotics may be used to fight bacterial infections, but they have no effect on viruses, like RSV, flu, Cold, or COVID.

**The best you can do is to make your child comfortable.** Make sure your child gets extra rest and drinks water or other liquids.

## How to get rid of a stuffy nose

### NASAL SPRAY

Use salt water (saline) nose drops. Give 1 to 2 drops in each opening of the nose (nostril) or spray 1 to 2 sprays in each nostril. For infants, use a rubber suction bulb to suck out the extra drops or spray.

Tip: When using the suction bulb, remember that before you put the bulb on your baby's nose, first squeeze the bulb part of the syringe. Then, gently stick the rubber tip into one nostril, and then slowly let go of the bulb.

### HUMIDIFIER

Put a cool-mist humidifier in your child's room. This can help the liquid that's making their nose stuffy thinner, so it is easier for your child to breathe. Put it close to your child (but safely out of your child's reach), because the humidifier makes the area closest to it the moistest. Be sure to carefully clean and dry the humidifier each day to stop bacteria or mold from growing; bacteria and mold can make your child sick.

\* Hot-water vaporizers should not be used, because the hot water or steam can burn your child.

## How to help a cough

### HONEY

- **Do not give honey to babies under 1 year - it is not safe**

### Cough drops or lozenges

Consider cough drops or lozenges for children 4 and older. Do not give cough drops or lozenges to a child younger than 4 years because he could choke on them. Also, do not give your child more cough drops than what the instructions on the package say.

### Mentholated rubs

- For children ages 2 years and older: Rub a thick layer on top of the skin on the chest and the front of the neck (throat area).

- The body's warmth helps the medication go into the air slowly over time. The child breathes in this air, which helps to soothe a cough, so the child can sleep.

- After using the medicine, put the medication container away and out of reach of children.

- Only use mentholated rubs on top of the skin.

## To help treat your child's fever:

- A fever is over 100.4°F. Your child may still have a fever even with medications. That is a good sign as your child's body is fighting the infection. Don't just look at the number on the thermometer – Go by how the child is acting (able to take meds, temp comes down a bit, drinking is ok, wake/alert). It is important to keep the child hydrated by drinking fluids.

## Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen

- If your child has a fever and is very uncomfortable, give her a medication with just one ingredient—either acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Always call your pediatrician right away if your child is under two months of age and has a fever.
- Do not give your child aspirin, which has been linked with Reye syndrome, a rare but very serious illness that affects the liver and brain.

## Over-the-counter (OTC) cough & cold medicines

**OTC cough and cold meds should not be given to infants and children under 4 years of age. Several studies show that cold and cough products that are taken by mouth don't work in children younger than 6 years and can have potentially serious side effects.**

**Over 6 years old, still recommend the above to avoid overdosing on acetaminophen.**

\*Many cold medicines already have acetaminophen (Tylenol or generic) in them. If you give one of these medicines along with acetaminophen, your child will get a double dose.

## When to schedule an appointment

- Fever over 100.4 for more than 5 days
- Difficulty Breathing - fast breaths, nostrils flaring, retractions (skin sucking in between or under ribs)
- Dehydration - less than 3 wet diapers/24 hrs or longer than 12 hours without urine for older kids
- Worsening symptoms after 7 days