

Home Care for Coughs and Colds

A virus causes most coughs and nasal congestion. Sore throat, fever for up to 3 days, mild headache and runny nose may also be present.

Many times your child will be diagnosed with a cold, bronchitis, upper respiratory infection, croup or viral illness.

Antibiotic treatment does not help viral infections improve any faster. If given when not needed, antibiotics can be harmful. The treatments prescribed below will help you feel better while your body's own defenses are defeating the virus.

- Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids
- Use saline nose drops or spray to relieve congestion if your child has trouble breathing or eating because of it
- Use a cool mist humidifier in the winter months
- Stay away from smoke
- Use Vicks® vapor rub
- Expose your child to warm mist from a shower

Sometimes your child may also have a fever, even up to 104 degrees for up to 3 days. If your child is uncomfortable and your child is more than 3 months of age, use acetaminophen to make them feel better. You may not be able to bring the fever down to normal but fevers are our body's friend and are necessary to fight infection. You don't want to keep your child feeling uncomfortable so go ahead and give them a dose of fever reducing medicine. Dosages for these medicines can be found in the RTCP green Infant and Child handbook or on our website.

Cough helps prevent against pneumonia as it clears the airways of excess of mucous. Never give over the counter cough and cold medicines to your children less than 6 years of age, as the side effects can be dangerous. Instead offer warm fluids, or ½-1 teaspoon of honey (if your child is older than 12 months of age) by itself or mixed into warm tea or water. Vicks ® Vapor Rub applied to the chest or feet can help break up the congestion while they sleep.

FOLLOW-UP or Call Us

If the fever does not go below 101° in 3 days (about 72hours)

If your child has shortness of breath, wheezing, nasal flaring or other breathing problems

If you have other concerns about your Childs breathing.