

VIRAL PRESCRIPTION

You or your child has been diagnosed as having an illness caused by a virus. The treatments prescribed below will help you feel better while your body's own defenses are combating the virus. Most viral infections last 7-10 days.

Antibiotic treatment does not cure viral infections

Antibiotics given when not needed may be harmful

General Instructions

Rest at home until you feel in better health. Getting 8-10 hours of sleep when you are sick is helpful

- Drink at least four 8-ounce glasses (1 quart) of water per day. Homemade soups have some beneficial effects
- Gargle to soothe a sore throat. A gargle can be made with ½ teaspoon of kosher, pickling or sea salt in 8 ounces of warm water. Gargling works by warming and cleansing the throat and tonsils. Sore throats can also be soothed with ice chips, sore throat spray, or lozenges.
- Use a Cool Mist Humidifier to relieve congestion and moisten dry mucous membranes. Use and clean humidifier per manufacturer's instructions (to prevent the growth of mold and bacteria).
- Use a Steam Vaporizer to promote drainage of nasal sinuses. Place vaporizer a safe distance from the patient to prevent burns. Due to the intense heat, use is not recommended with younger children. Use and clean vaporizer per manufacturer's instructions.

Over the Counter Medications

- Cold and flu medications relieve symptoms but do not actually kill viruses. Although you can't kill a virus, you can take medications that will help you feel better.
- Petroleum jelly or skin lotion can help ease your chapped nose or lips
- Lozenges or cough drops may soothe a sore or dry throat. Do not give to a child aged 3 or younger
- Pain relievers, such as acetaminophen, aspirin, or ibuprofen, relieve head and body aches, sore throat, and fever
 - Aspirin and ibuprofen should be taken after meals or with food to minimize stomach irritation. If fever is mild, bringing it down is not needed; a mild fever is one of the body's ways to kill the virus and is not dangerous. Never give aspirin to children/teenagers. It can cause Reye' Syndrome (a rare, but often fatal condition). Adults can take aspirin 325mg every 4 hours. Adult's dosing of Ibuprofen is 200mg-400mg every 4 hours.
- Oral decongestants can help relieve a stuffy nose, ear congestion, or popping feeling in ears, but can also make you feel very dry. Adult dosing: Pseudoephedrine 60mg every 4-6 hours or Phenylephrine 10mg every 4 hours.
- Nasal decongestants (nose sprays or drops) can relieve a stuffy nose. They should be used sparingly, and not for more than 3 days because of rebound swelling. They should not be given to children less than 6 months of age. Use Oxymetazoline or Phenylephrine 2 sprays each nostril every 4 hours up to 3 days.

- Nasal saline (salt solution) will help break up thick mucus blocking the nose and sinuses. Saline nose sprays or drops can be purchased or made at home. Mix ¼ teaspoon of non-iodized salt and ¼ teaspoon of baking soda in ½ cup of water. Place several drops in the nostrils with a dropper, sniff solution from a spoon, or use a netti pot. (If you have well water, then use water that has boiled but is now cooled)
- Cough syrups should be used for only certain kinds of coughs
 - Coughing is useful because it removes secretions from your throat. If your cough is wet and productive (coughing up secretions), you should not use a cough suppressant unless the cough is preventing you from sleeping. Instead, try sucking on hard candies or drinking something hot.
 - If you have a dry, hacking non-productive cough (not coughing up any secretions), you may try a cough suppressant, for adults Dextromethorphan 10mg-20mg every 4 hours and Benzonatate 200mg every 8 hours, with expectorant Guaifenesin 200mg-400mg every 4 hours, to loosen up the mucus and ease your discomfort.
 - Honey can be helpful in treating cough in children over 1 year old. It can be given straight or diluted in water.
- Antihistamines are not very effective for treating cold or flu symptoms and may cause drowsiness and thicken the secretions you are trying to dislodge. For colds and flu, it is better to use a plain decongestant.

Never take left over or old antibiotics

Antibiotics do not kill cold or flu viruses or help aches, pains, or fever

