



OCTOBER 2022
WINTER WELLNESS

CARE CONNECTION

COPING WITH A COLD: WHICH REMEDIES WORK

Cold remedies are almost as common as the common cold, but are they effective? Unfortunately, nothing can cure a cold. But some remedies might help ease your symptoms and keep you from feeling so miserable. Here's a look at some common cold remedies and what's known about them.

COLD REMEDIES THAT WORK

If you catch a cold, you can expect to be sick for one to two weeks, but that doesn't mean you have to be miserable. These remedies might help you feel better:

- **Stay hydrated.** Water, juice, clear broth or warm lemon water with honey helps loosen congestion and prevents dehydration. Avoid alcohol, coffee and caffeinated sodas, which can make dehydration worse.
- **Rest.** Your body needs rest to heal.
- **Soothe a sore throat.** A saltwater gargle — 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon salt dissolved in an 8-ounce glass of warm water — can temporarily relieve a sore or scratchy throat. You can also try ice chips, sore throat sprays, lozenges or hard candy.
Note: Children younger than 6 years are unlikely to be able to gargle properly. Use caution when giving lozenges or hard candy to children because they can choke on them. Don't give lozenges or hard candy to children younger than 6 years.
- **Combat stuffiness.** Over-the-counter saline nasal drops or sprays can help relieve stuffiness and congestion.
- **Relieve pain.** Adults can take acetaminophen (Tylenol, others), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) or aspirin. For children 6 months or younger, give only acetaminophen. For children older than 6 months, give either acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Ask your child's doctor for the correct dose for your child's age and weight.
Note: Use caution when giving aspirin to children or teenagers. Though aspirin is approved for use in children older than age 3, children and teenagers recovering from chickenpox or flu-like symptoms should never take aspirin. This is because aspirin has been linked to Reye's syndrome, a rare but potentially life-threatening condition, in such children.
- **Sip warm liquids.** A cold remedy used in many cultures, taking in warm liquids (such as chicken soup, tea or warm apple juice) might be soothing and can help ease congestion by increasing mucus flow.
- **Try honey.** Honey may help coughs in adults and children who are older than age 1. Try it in hot tea.
- **Add moisture to the air.** A cool-mist vaporizer or humidifier can add moisture to your home, which might help loosen congestion. Change the water daily, and clean the unit according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- **Try over-the-counter (OTC) cold and cough medications.** For adults and children age 5 and older, OTC decongestants, antihistamines and pain relievers might offer some symptom relief. However, they won't prevent a cold or shorten its duration, and most have some side effects. Experts agree that these shouldn't be given to younger children. Overuse and misuse of these medications can cause serious damage. Talk with your child's doctor before giving any medications. Take medications only as directed. Some cold remedies contain multiple ingredients, such as a decongestant plus a pain reliever, so read the labels of cold medications you take to make sure you're not taking too much of any medication.



COLD REMEDIES THAT DON'T WORK

The list of ineffective cold remedies is long. Some of the more common ones that don't work include:

- **Antibiotics.** These attack bacteria, but they're no help against cold viruses. Avoid asking your doctor for antibiotics for a cold or using old antibiotics you have on hand. You won't get well any faster, and inappropriate use of antibiotics contributes to the serious and growing problem of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
- **Over-the-counter cold and cough medications in young children.** OTC cold and cough medications may cause serious and even life-threatening side effects in children. Talk with your child's doctor before giving any medications.

COLD REMEDIES WITH CONFLICTING EVIDENCE

In spite of ongoing studies, the scientific jury is still out on some popular cold remedies, such as vitamin C and echinacea. Here's an update on some common alternative remedies:

- **Vitamin C.** It appears that taking vitamin C won't usually help the average person prevent colds. However, some studies have found that taking vitamin C before cold symptoms start may shorten the length of time you have symptoms. Vitamin C may benefit people at higher risk of colds due to frequent exposure — for example, children who attend group child care during the winter.
- **Echinacea.** Study results on whether echinacea prevents or shortens colds are mixed. Some studies show no benefit. Others show some reduction in the severity and duration of cold symptoms when taken in the early stages of a cold. Different types of echinacea used in different studies may have contributed to the mixed results. Echinacea seems to be most effective if you take it when you notice cold symptoms and continue it for seven to 10 days. It appears to be safe for healthy adults, but it can interact with many drugs. Check with your doctor before taking echinacea or any other supplement.
- **Zinc.** Several studies have suggested that zinc supplements may reduce the length of a cold. But research has turned up mixed results about zinc and colds. Some studies show that zinc lozenges or syrup reduce the length of a cold by about one day, especially when taken within 24 to 48 hours of the first signs and symptoms of a cold. Zinc also has potentially harmful side effects. Talk to your doctor before considering the use of zinc to prevent or reduce the length of colds.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Although usually minor, colds can make you feel miserable. It's tempting to try the latest remedy, but the best thing you can do is take care of yourself. Rest, drink fluids, and keep the air around you moist. Remember to wash your hands frequently.

Source: [MayoClinic](#)

WELLNESS TIP!

Give Meditation a Try

We all know that stress has a negative effect on our health. Meditation is a great, scientifically-proven way to reduce stress and improve overall health.

In one study involving 48 people with high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, or both, researchers found that meditation helped lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and inflammation compared with the control group. Additionally, the participants in the meditation group reported improved mental and physical wellness.

Sources: [Healthline](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

HEALTHCLIPS IS A GREAT MEDICAL RESOURCE!

HealthClips Online is a free platform for health and wellness education, available for FMCP members on the Member Self-Service Online Portal.

There are more than 4,000 videos about various health and wellness topics, plus specially curated playlists and facility resource links.

Log on to [the Member Portal](#) **healthclips** to access HealthClips!

CDC TIPS FOR SAFE AND HEALTHY HOLIDAY TRAVEL

'Tis the season to visit loved ones at home or abroad— or, maybe you are taking a holiday vacation. Whether you're seeking a winter wonderland or escaping subzero temperatures, follow these travel tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for a healthy and safe holiday travel season.



BEFORE TRAVEL TIPS

- **Learn about health concerns at your destination.** Even if you're familiar with your destination, new and important health concerns could make or break your trip. Once you are in the know, make an appointment with a travel medicine specialist or your health care provider at least a month before your trip to get vaccines, medications, and health advice for yourself and your children. Even if you are leaving soon, a visit to the a doctor is still valuable.
- **Pack a travel health kit.** Your travel health kit may include prescription and over-the-counter medicines (enough to last your whole trip, plus a little extra), sunscreen, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, first aid supplies, health insurance card, and insect repellent. Pack your prescription drugs and any must-have items in your carry-on in case your luggage gets lost.
- **Get safety information.** For the latest safety updates and help in an emergency, enroll with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). Use the US State Department website to monitor travel advisories at your destination.
- **Plan for the unexpected.** Leave copies of your itinerary, contact information, credit cards, and passport with someone at home, in case you lose them during travel. Consider buying additional insurance that covers international health care and emergency evacuation, especially if you are traveling to remote areas.

DURING YOUR TRIP

- **Be especially careful to travel safely while away from home.** Road accidents are the number one killer of Americans abroad.
 - Buckle up and choose safe transportation.
 - Ride only in marked taxis or ride-sharing vehicles, and avoid overcrowded, overweight, or top-heavy buses or vans.
 - Be alert when crossing the street, especially in countries where people drive on the left.
 - Children should always ride in age-appropriate car seats, even when traveling abroad. Bring car seats with you when you travel, because they may not be available or meet U.S. safety standards in many countries.
- **Dress for the weather in your destination.**
 - If you're visiting a cold climate, wear warm clothing in several loose layers. Wear a tightly woven, wind-resistant coat or jacket, and wear inner layers of light, warm clothing as well as mittens, hats, and scarves.
 - If you're visiting a warm climate, wear sun protectant layers and loose, lightweight, and light-colored clothing. Consider a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher with natural ingredients.
- **Make sure your equipment is appropriate for the weather, climate, and your activities.**
 - In wet conditions, choose waterproof shoes that have good traction.
 - For water activities, choose an appropriately thick wetsuit to protect you from hypothermia in cold climates, and be sure to protect your skin from the sun's rays in warmer climates.
 - Use personal flotation devices. They are lifesaving if someone becomes unable to swim due to injury or the weather.
 - Rest often and stay in the shade when outdoors during the hottest parts of the day.
- **Stay dry; your body loses heat quickly when wet.**
 - Sweat and wet clothing can chill the body rapidly and increase heat loss.
 - If you're actively moving, remove extra layers of clothing whenever you feel too warm or start to sweat.
- **Do not ignore signs of temperature-related illness, like hypothermia, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke.**
 - Early symptoms of hypothermia include shivering, feeling tired, clumsiness, and confusion. As a person's body loses more heat shivering may stop, skin may turn blue, pupils of eyes may expand (dilate), pulse and breathing slows, and person may lose consciousness.
 - *If a person's body temperature is below 95°F or has any of the above symptoms, get medical attention immediately.* If immediate medical care is not available, find shelter indoors, in the warmest room possible, remove all wet clothing, warm the chest, neck, head, and groin first using a warm dry compress or electric blanket, if available (you can also use skin-to-skin contact under a warm, dry layers of blankets, clothing, towels, or sheets), and drink a non-alcoholic or non-caffeinated warm beverage. Do not try to give beverages to an unconscious person with hypothermia.
 - Early signs of frostbite include numbness, tingling, stinging, or pain in areas of the body most exposed to the cold. *If you detect symptoms of frostbite, seek medical care immediately.* If immediate medical care is not available, move to a warmer room or shelter, remove all wet clothing, and soak the affected body part in warm water.
 - *Never ignore shivering.* Shivering is an early sign that your body is losing heat. Constant shivering is a sign you need to find shelter and get warm.
 - Symptoms of heat exhaustion include excessive thirst, profuse sweating, headache, dizziness or confusion, and nausea. *If you or anyone you are traveling with has these symptoms, get out of the sun immediately and try to cool off with a fan, air conditioning, or by getting in cool water.* Also, drink cool, non-alcoholic beverages such as water or sports drinks with electrolytes.
 - Early symptoms of heat stroke are similar to those of heat exhaustion but lead to more severe symptoms including lack of sweating, body temperature rising to 106°F or higher within 10-15 minutes (even with no thermometer, skin will feel very hot to the touch), or loss of consciousness. *If you experience these symptoms, seek medical help immediately. Heat stroke is a medical emergency.*

AFTER YOUR RETURN

- **If you are not feeling well when you get home, let your doctor know where you have been, including all the places you went on your trip and what you did there.** This information will help your doctor consider diseases or conditions not typically seen in the United States. Remember, some travel-related illnesses may not cause symptoms until after you get home.

Sources: [CDC - Holiday Travel](#), [CDC - Cold Weather](#), [CDC - Hot Weather](#)

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

NECA/IBEW Family Medical Care Plan
410 Chickamauga Avenue, Suite 301
Rossville, GA 30741

PPO - Anthem
1-800-810-BLUE
(Provider locator services)
www.anthem.com

Rx Drugs - SavRx
1-866-233-4239
www.savrx.com

Teladoc
1-800-TELADOC
www.teladoc.com/FMCP
(if applicable)

Dental - MetLife
1-800-942-0854
www.metlife.com/mybenefits
(if applicable)

Vision - VSP
1-800-877-7195
www.vsp.com
(if applicable)

1-877-937-9602
www.nifmcp.com