

# KidsFirst

December 2016



A publication of **Texas Children's Health Plan CHIP and STAR Members** ages 0-6 and their parents.

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## Be ready for cold and flu season

Flu season is here. And December, January, and February are usually the worst months for the flu. You can help stop the spread of flu by getting the flu shot. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get the vaccine. Don't wait. Protect yourself and your family. You can get the flu shot at your doctor's office.

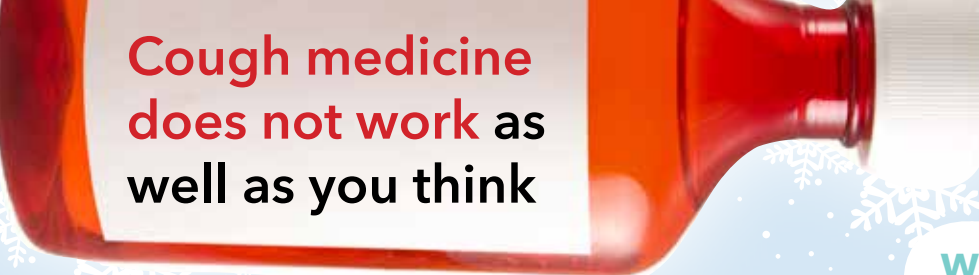
For help finding a doctor, call 1-866-959-6555 (CHIP) or 1-866-959-2555 (STAR).



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## Cough medicine does not work as well as you think

The cough is one of the best defenses the lungs have. Mucus traps bacteria. Coughing gets rid of the mucus and the bacteria goes with it. Without a good, productive cough, children can much more easily get pneumonia (lung infection) and lung damage.

Research studies show that cough medicine does not work to reduce cough from a cold. That means that giving cough medicine is no better than giving no medicine at all. And, it puts the child at risk for side effects from the medicine. Studies in children with colds that compared honey to cough medicine and to giving no medicine, found that honey helps the cough, while cough medicine did not help.

When I speak to pediatricians, most of them know that cough medicine does not work, but they prescribe it anyway. When I ask why, they say the parents expect it. If a child has a cold with a cough and the doctor does not prescribe cough medicine the parent thinks that the doctor has not done his or her job. Most doctors are relieved when a parent says that they do not want cough medicine for their child..

### What can a parent do for their child who has a cough with a cold?

- Stay well hydrated. Chicken soup is great!
- If a child is over the age of 1, a teaspoon of honey can help the cough. Don't give honey to an infant under the age of 1. This increases the risk for infant botulism.
- Remember, the cough protects the lungs. The cold should get better in a few days.
- See a doctor right away if there is high fever, difficulty breathing, fast breathing, or tightness in the chest.

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## Honey Elixir Recipe

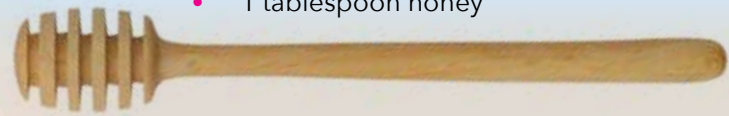
Don't let cold and flu season get you down. Stock up on this home remedy to relieve symptoms that accompany the cold and flu. It's even delicious when you're feeling great!

What you need:

- A tall glass or your favorite mug
- Boiling water
- 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon dried ginger or 1 inch fresh ginger grated
- 1 tablespoon honey

Directions:

1. Boil water.
2. Squeeze the juice of lemon into your hands to catch the seeds and let juice go into glass or mug.
3. Add dried ginger. If using fresh ginger, cut the peel of an inch of ginger and grate it into cup.
4. Add honey.
5. Add water. Sip until done.





## Must-Know Winter Health and Safety Tips

Winter is a great season for outdoor activities. Cold weather, ice, and snow can be fun but also dangerous for children. Use the following tips to help your children stay warm and safe this winter.

### What to Wear

- Dress children warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Don't forget warm boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat.
- Always dress children in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in the same weather.
- Blankets, quilts, pillows, and other loose bedding should be kept out of a baby's sleeping environment because they can cause smothering deaths.
- If a blanket is used to keep a sleeping baby warm, it should be thin and tucked under the crib mattress. This bedding should only reach as far as the baby's chest, so the infant's face is less likely to become covered.

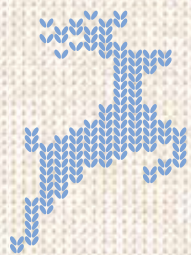
### Winter Health

- If your child has winter nosebleeds, try using a humidifier in the child's room at night. Saline nose drops or petrolatum jelly may help keep the nose moist.
- Viruses that cause colds and flu are more common in the winter. Frequent hand washing and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into their elbow may help cut the spread of the flu.
- Children 6 months of age and up should get the flu shot to reduce their risk of catching the flu. It's not too late to get the vaccine!

## Fever Fears: A Quick Guide to Treating your Child's Fever

Age	Temperature	What to do
0-3 months	100 degrees or higher.	Call the doctor, even if your child doesn't have any other signs or symptoms.
3-6 months	Up to 102 degrees.	Make sure your child rests and drinks plenty of fluids. Medicine isn't needed. Call the doctor if your child seems sluggish.
3-6 months	Above 102 degrees.	Call the doctor. The doctor may suggest that you bring your child in for a visit.
6-24 months	Above 102 degrees.	Give your child Tylenol <sup>®</sup> . If your child is age 6 months or older, you may use ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin).  Read the label carefully for correct dosage. <b>Don't give aspirin to an infant or toddler.</b>  Call the doctor if the fever doesn't respond to medicine or lasts longer than one day.
2-17 years	Up to 102 degrees.	Make sure your child rests and drinks plenty of fluids. Medicine isn't needed. Call the doctor if your child seems sluggish.
2-17 years	Above 102 degrees.	If your child seems uncomfortable, give your child Tylenol <sup>®</sup> or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, others).  <b>Read the label carefully for correct dosage, and be careful not to give your child more than one medication containing acetaminophen, such as some cough and cold medicines.</b>  Avoid giving aspirin to children or teenagers.  Call the doctor if the fever doesn't respond to medicine or lasts longer than three days.

## Keep the FLU out of your holiday plans



You can keep seasonal flu out of your holiday plans. It's not too late to get your flu shot. Even if you have already had the flu this year, you could get it again because there are several types each season.

A lot of people spend time in crowds this time of year and the flu really starts to spread. Here are some things you can do to help keep the flu from ruining your holidays.

1. Wash your hands often.
2. Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not in your hand.
3. Do the air kiss. You can greet family and friends by giving them a hug and kissing the air near their cheek.
4. Don't use your fingers. Use serving utensils or cutlery to serve and eat food.
5. Write your name on your cup. Instead of using glasses or original containers, use disposable ones and write names on them.
6. Carry hand sanitizer with you. Use it often.
7. Get enough sleep. Lack of sleep weakens your immune system which makes it easier to get sick.
8. Stay away if you are sick. If you feel you are getting sick, stay home and rest. Stay away from other people.
9. Keep your distance. When you are in a crowd, such as a church service or party, try to keep several feet away from other people.

## Holiday Survival

### GUIDE

The holiday season is the most wonderful time of the year, especially for kids. Texas Children's Health Plan wants to help you survive the holidays with some helpful tips on healthy eating and toy safety. We have also included holiday gift giving locations. To learn more, go to [TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org/holidays](http://TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org/holidays)

## Get ready, get set,

### DRAW

We want you to you to enter our annual T-shirt design contest!

Your child won't want to miss the chance to be the winning artist for our 2017 T-shirt contest. Every member who enters the contest will get a soccer ball. We will pick a winner in February 2017. The winner's design will be printed on a Texas Children's Health Plan T-shirt. The winner will also receive prizes and have his or her drawings published in future editions of our newsletters.

Entries should be sent in on unlined, white letter-sized paper. You can use crayons, markers, pencils, or paints. The deadline is February 1, 2017.

Don't forget to include your child's name, age, and Texas Children's Health Plan Member ID number with each entry. Also, please make sure your child's drawing has our name, Texas Children's Health Plan, on it.

Mail entries to:

Texas Children's Health Plan  
Marketing Department  
P.O. Box 301011, WLS 8366  
Houston, Texas 77230-1011

