

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. It also puts the child at risk for side effects from the medicine. Studies comparing honey to cough medicine found that honey helped 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. So the next time your child has a cough with a cold, remember that you don't have to give her cough medicine to make it go away. Talk with your doctor about other options for helping your child's cough and follow the helpful tips.

*Harold J. Farber, MD, MSPH
Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Pulmonary Section
Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Children's Hospital
Associate Medical Director, Texas Children's Health Plan*

4 Tips to Help Your Child's Cough and Cold

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



Honey Elixir Recipe

Don't let cold and flu season knock you for a loop. 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 large mug
- Boiling water
- 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon dried ginger or 1 inch fresh ginger grated
- 1 tablespoon honey

Directions:

- Boil water.
- Squeeze the juice of lemon into your hands to catch the seeds and let juice go into glass or mug.
- Add dried ginger. If using fresh ginger, cut the peel of an inch of ginger and grate it into cup.
- Add honey.
- Add water. Sip until done. Be careful, it's hot!



Is it a cold or the flu?

Your child has a sore throat, cough, and high fever. Could it be the flu? Or just a cold?

The flu usually makes kids feel worse than if they have a cold. But it's not always easy to tell the difference between the two. Here are tips on what to look for — and what to do.

When should I call the doctor?

If you have any doubts, it's best to call the doctor. An illness that seems like a cold can turn out to be the flu. And other illnesses, like strep throat or pneumonia, can seem like the flu. Even doctors sometimes need to do a test to know for sure if a child has the flu or a cold.

It's important to get medical care right away if your child:

- seems to be getting worse
- has a high fever
- has a sore throat
- has trouble breathing
- has a bad headache
- seems confused

Colds or Flu: Symptoms Guide

Answer these questions to see if your child has the flu or a cold:

Question	Flu	Cold
Did the illness come on suddenly?	Yes	No
Does your child have a high fever?	Yes	No (or fever is mild)
Is your child's energy level very low?	Yes	No
Is your child's head achy?	Yes	No
Is your child's appetite less than normal?	Yes	No
Are your child's muscles achy?	Yes	No
Does your child have chills?	Yes	No

If most of your answers are “yes,” chances are your child has the flu. If your answers are mostly “no,” it's probably a cold.



How is the flu treated?

Most of the time, you can care for your child at home with plenty of liquids, rest, and comfort.

Even healthy children can struggle with the flu. But some kids — like those younger than 5 or kids with asthma — are more likely to have problems if they get the flu. In some cases, a doctor might prescribe an antiviral medicine to lessen flu symptoms.

What can parents do?

- Prevention is the best medicine. Make sure that everyone in your family gets a flu vaccine every year.
- Teach your kids good hand washing habits to help stop the spread of flu.
- If your child has asthma or another illness, call your doctor right away if your child shows signs of the flu. The doctor might need to give your child antiviral medicines, which only work when children start taking them within 48 hours of when flu symptoms start.

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Make healthy holiday choices

The holidays are a time for gathering and celebration. From holiday parties to family gatherings, people tend to eat and drink more during this time of year. To celebrate good health this season, follow these tips to enjoy the holidays without overindulging.

- Stay away from junk food! Pick fruits and vegetables to satisfy your hunger instead.
- Eat healthy snacks in between meals.
- Stop eating if you are full.
- Don't go to a party hungry because you will usually eat more than you wanted. Eat a light meal or snack beforehand.
- Enjoy a serving of dessert, but monitor yourself and think about what you are eating.
- Exercise! Go on a walk with family or friends after a holiday meal. Daily exercise will help keep you healthy for the holidays.



Sweet potato and zucchini pancakes

What you need:

- 1 large zucchini, shredded (about 1 cup)
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and shredded (about 1 cup)
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

What you do:

1. Mix zucchini, sweet potato, eggs, salt, pepper, and flour. Mix until well combined.
2. Heat olive oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat.
3. Using a soup ladle, drop about ¼ cup of mixture into skillet and cook each cake about until golden brown, about 2–3 minutes on each side. Serve as is or with applesauce.

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