

COLD AND FLU SEASON; AND CHILDREN
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How can I tell if it is a cold or the flu?

Both colds and flu cause inflammation of the mucous membranes of the nose, throat and mouth. Both the cold and flu cause a stuffy nose, sore throat, cough and fever. People who have the flu usually know the exact day that it hits. Flu symptoms are more serious than a cold and last longer, leaving you with a wiped out feeling, a headache, chills, dry cough and body aches. Young children also may experience nausea and vomiting with the flu.

However what many people refer to as the stomach flu is actually gastroenteritis. A cold generally comes on gradually. If someone has a cold they generally have a runny nose and sneezing.

If it is a cold how can I safely treat it in a child?

- 1. Do not use cough and cold products in children under the age of 2, unless a health care professional tells you to.**
- 2. Do not give children medicine that is made for adults. Use only products marked for use in children, which may say pediatric use. If you are unsure about the right product for your child, ask your doctor/nurse practitioner or pharmacist.**
- 3. Read and follow all directions on the drug facts label.**
- 4. Do not give a child medicine more often or in greater amounts than what is on the label. Too much medicine may lead to serious and life-threatening side effects. If your child stays with more than one person throughout the day keep a written schedule with your child so that everyone is on the same page as to when and how much medicine should be given. Many medication errors occur when a child has more than one caregiver and both are giving the child medication.**
- 5. For liquid medicines use the measuring device that is packaged with the medicine or purchased at the pharmacy. A kitchen teaspoon or tablespoon should not be used.**
- 6. If you do not understand the instructions speak with your pharmacist.**
- 7. Cough and cold medicine only treats the symptoms of the cold, they do not cure the cold. Do not give your child medicine for symptoms they do not have. Be careful not to double up on ingredients.**
- 8. Antibiotics do not help viral illnesses. Using antibiotic when they are not needed spreads antibiotic resistant bacteria, making fewer medicines effective for treating diseases. Never give a child antibiotics that are not ordered by your health care professional.**

What should I do if my child comes down with the flu or a cold?

- 1. Give your child plenty of fluids such as water, juice, soup and non-caffeinated beverages help loosen mucus, keep your child hydrated and makes them feel better, especially if they have a fever.**
- 2. Gargling with salt water may relieve a sore throat, if the child is old enough to gargle.**
- 3. A cool mist humidifier may help relieve a stuffy nose. Keep the humidifier clean to avoid mold build-up.**
- 4. Saline nasal drops and suctioning with a bulb syringe can help infants and small**

children breath better, but be gentle or your will aggravate the nasal passages and make it worse.

5. Dress children comfortably, like you would dress yourself. Bundling a child with a fever up can make it worse.
6. Don't give aspirin or aspirin containing medicine to children or teenagers.
7. Generally colds and flu have to run their course. However conditions may develop that require treatment, such as bronchitis, sinusitis, ear infections and pneumonia.
8. Call a health care professional if you feel your child's condition is getting worse, or if they have symptoms such as wheezing, coughing so bad that it disrupts sleep, a fever that will not go down, shortness of breath, pain in the face or chest, unusual drowsiness, refusal to eat, holding their ears or stomach, excess crying or thick, green mucus.

Information for this article was obtained from the FDA at [ww.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).