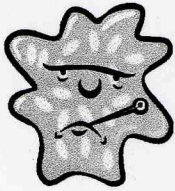


# Suggestions for Children With Viral Respiratory Illnesses

New York State Department of Health – New York State Wise Antibiotics Information Team

## Symptoms

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- Cold
- Sore Throat
- Cough
- Runny Nose
- Other

Your child has symptoms which can be associated with an illness caused by a virus. The suggestions below will help your child feel better while his/her body's defenses are combating the virus. Most viral infections last 7-10 days.

## General Instructions

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### Your Child Should:

- ⇒ **Rest:** At home until he/she feels better. It is important for your child to get 8 - 10 hours of sleep when he/she is sick.
- ⇒ **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 1/2 teaspoon of table 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 in children 5 years or older.
- ⇒ **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 child to prevent burns. Due to the intense heat, use is not recommended with younger children. Use and clean vaporizer per manufacturer's instructions.
- ⇒ **To prevent the spread of illness**, encourage frequent handwashing and good respiratory etiquette, such as covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

## Over the Counter Medicines

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Cold and flu medicines relieve symptoms but they do not actually kill viruses. Although you can't kill a virus, you can take medicines that help relieve symptoms:

- ⇒ **Petroleum jelly** or skin lotion can help ease a chapped nose or lips.
- ⇒ **Lozenges or cough drops** may soothe a sore or dry throat. Do not give these products to a child aged 5 or younger.
- ⇒ **Pain relievers**, such as acetaminophen, or ibuprofen, relieve head and body aches, sore throats, and fevers. **Please follow package directions.**
  - Ibuprofen should be taken after meals or with food to minimize stomach irritation.
- ⇒ **If a fever** is less than 101°F, bringing it down is not necessary; a mild fever is one of the body's ways to kill the virus and it is not dangerous.

**Never give aspirin to children or teenagers. It can cause Reye's Syndrome, a rare, but often fatal condition.**

