



## Home Treatments for Adults with Cold/Cough/Flu Symptoms

- 1. Relieve nasal congestion:** “Original formula” **Sudafed** (generic - pseudoephedrine) - indicated by a “D” in some combination medications such as Claritin-D. *Sold from behind the pharmacy counter without a prescription. You will need a photo ID.* A much better decongestant than phenylephrine which is sold off the shelf in Sudafed PE and most other off-the-shelf combination meds. Should not be used by people with high blood pressure. 12- Hour tablets available. Follow label directions.
- 2. Dry up runny nose:** *Less sedating antihistamines are Allegra, Claritin (least sedating), and Zyrtec. All three also come in combination with pseudoephedrine – Claritin-D).* Benadryl and Coricidin HBP are more sedating, but effective. Follow label directions.
- 3. Open nasal passages and relieve nasal congestion:** 12-hour **Afrin Nasal Spray** - Generic available. Do not use more than three days or your nose will get congested when you stop using it. After every three days, take a break from it for 24-48 hours. Use this after blowing your nose, cleaning with nasal saline spray, or using a nasal wash system (i.e.-**Neti pot, Neti bottle**). Follow label directions.
- 4. Open nasal passages and relieve nasal congestion: Vicks Vapor Rub, Tiger Balm** – Rub on the upper chest at bed time (Vicks) and put on a t-shirt; or dab under the nose (either) to temporarily open nasal passages. *Both work very well. Should be used more often.* (Patients also reports decreased nighttime cough after rubbing Vicks on their feet and sleeping with socks on.)
  - o Asian Hot and Sour Soup, Chicken Tortilla Soup** – Any warm, spicy, broth-based soup with peppers or hot spices. You can also put 1/8-1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne in warm water to sip.
- 5. Relieve sinus pain and pressure: Warm packs** across the face. Take a clean COTTON sock (not nylon) and fill with regular uncooked rice and tie to make a loose pack. Warm the rice sock in the microwave for a minute or so until it is warm, but not too hot to put on your face. Lay it across your forehead or nose/cheeks/sinuses for 10-15 minutes. *This feels good, should be used more often.*
- 6. Relieve cough: Mucinex-DM (12-hr tablet), Robitussin 12-hour (liquid), Delsym (liquid)** (dextromethorphan, “DM”) – Mucinex-DM preferred, has maximum dose. Follow label directions. Also, throat lozenges, mints, and hard candies are easy to carry with you.
  - o Honey** - Drink 4-6 ounces (1/2-3/4 cup measure) of hot tea or hot water with one tablespoon of honey every other hour. Excellent in Constant Comment hot tea. Good while studying or lounging at home. Not for diabetics.



7. **When something hurts: Acetaminophen** (Tylenol), **ibuprofen** (Motrin, Advil) and **naproxen** (Aleve). For relief of sinus pressure and pain, sore throat, ear pain, body aches, etc. ALWAYS read and follow label directions. Be aware these are often included in combination cold/flu medications. Read the labels to know how much you are taking and do not take more than the recommended daily amount (from all of your medication sources).
8. **Relieve sore throat:** Start with #9! **Salt water gargles** are helpful for soothing throat pain. Use 1/4 - 1/2 teaspoon salt to one cup of warm water (8 oz measuring cup). Don't swallow. After gargling, use **Chloraseptic Max** (benzocaine) throat lozenges or similar sprays.
9. **Water** - Staying hydrated keeps throat and cough secretions from getting thicker. You can drink other clear liquids also, but water is best. Try a little lemon juice in it to cut the secretions in your throat, but not if it hurts more to drink it.
10. **Cool Mist Humidifier** - Increase the humidity, especially in the room where you sleep. Read the instructions. Turn off fans that can dry your nose and throat while you sleep. Also, if you do not have fever, take a steamy shower before bed.
11. **Time** - Treat your symptoms and expect gradual recovery in 7-10 days, sometimes, longer. Antibiotics won't shorten the duration of your cold symptoms and are a waste of your money.
12. **Wisdom** - If your illness is getting worse or if you are worried about your illness, please seek professional medical care!

Legal disclaimer: These tips are suggestions only. Consult with your medical provider before taking medications, especially if you have a medical condition or are taking other medications. Brand name products listed are for example only. Generic substitutes are equally effective. Seek immediate medical care for any urgent concerns or serious illness.