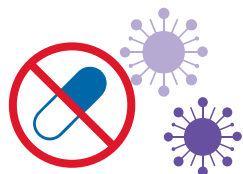


# The best approach to respiratory infections

Most respiratory infections are caused by a virus



NO ANTIBIOTICS

- Viral infections will **improve without treatment**.
- Medications can **reduce symptoms** like cough and congestion.
- For viral infections, an antibiotic **will not** help you feel better faster.

## Focus on relieving symptoms for respiratory infections

- Many options are available to help with respiratory symptoms.
- **Check the ingredient list carefully**, and choose products with ingredients that are safe and effective based on the list below.
- Follow package directions or clinician instructions regarding the use of these products.
- Generic or store brands can be just as effective as brand names, at a lower cost.



## Best options to help with symptom relief for older adults

### Congestion



- ☐ Pseudoephedrine
- ☐ Sterile saline nasal washes, saline nasal sprays, or saline nasal gel
- ☐ Nasal sprays (oxymetazoline, fluticasone, mometasone)
- ☐ Allergy medications (cetirizine, fexofenadine, loratadine)

### Cough



- ☐ Honey
- ☐ Lozenges with menthol (particularly those with honey)
- ☐ Guaifenesin
- ☐ Dextromethorphan

### Sore throat



- ☐ Honey
- ☐ Lozenges with menthol (particularly those with honey)
- ☐ Acetaminophen (Tylenol or generics)
- ☐ Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, or generics)

### Fever or body aches



- ☐ Acetaminophen (Tylenol or generics)
- ☐ Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or generics

Most over-the-counter products contain multiple medications.  
Use the Drug Facts label to identify which ingredients are included.

Drug Facts	
Active ingredients (in each 15 mL)	Purpose
Acetaminophen 650 mg.....	Pain reliever/fever reducer
Dextromethorphan HBr 10 mg.....	Cough suppressant
Diphenhydramine 12.5 mg.....	Antihistamine
Guaifenesin 200 mg.....	Expectorant
<b>Uses</b> ■ temporarily relieves these common cold and flu symptoms: ■ cough ■ minor aches and pains ■ sore throat ■ headache ■ fever ■ helps loosen phlegm (mucus) and thin bronchial secretions to rid the bronchial passageways of bothersome mucus and make coughs more productive	

*This is for educational purposes only and does not reflect any particular product.*

- **Look for the amount of acetaminophen or ibuprofen in combination products.** Too much of these medications in one day can harm your liver or kidneys.
  - Acetaminophen maximum daily dose: 3,250 mg
  - Ibuprofen maximum daily dose: 2,400 mg
- **Watch out for liquids with alcohol content.** This should be noted on the label.



- **AVOID products with diphenhydramine, doxylamine, chlorpheniramine, and brompheniramine** as they can cause dizziness and confusion in older adults.
- **AVOID phenylephrine.** It is ineffective and can raise blood pressure and heart rate.

## Tips for home remedies

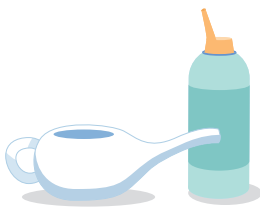
### Honey

- The recommended amount of honey is 2 to 3 tablespoons a day. This may be taken all at once or split into 2 to 3 doses during the day.
- Honey can be taken on its own with a spoon, or mixed with warm water or tea.



### Saline nasal washes

- Use water that is distilled, boiled, or filtered. Other types of water may contain small amounts of bacteria or microbes.
- Put saline in one nostril and have it drain out the other, flushing mucus and rinsing the nasal passages. *See video link to the right.*
- Select a device that is easiest for you to use—neti pot, sinus rinse bottle, nasal spray, or nasal gel.



**Video about  
nasal washing**

### Hydration

- Stay hydrated. It can be hard to drink enough fluids. Dehydration, or not having enough fluids, can lead to dizziness, confusion, and falls in older adults.



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Pharmaceutical Assistance  
Contract for the Elderly



**These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating clinician based on an individual patient's clinical condition.** This material is provided by Alosa Health, a nonprofit organization which accepts no funding from any pharmaceutical company. It was supported by the PACE Program of the Department of Aging of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.