

Cough & Congestion

What type of cough is it?

Visit [this link](#) to hear a variety of types of coughs, and what they may represent.

Treating Cough and Congestion

Water/Fluids- water, juice, warm chicken soup or tea helps loosen congestion and prevents dehydration. Avoid caffeine, excess sugary beverages.

Salt water- a saltwater gargle (1/4-1/2 teaspoon salt in 8 ounces of warm water) can temporarily relieve a scratchy or sore throat

Saline nasal drops/sprays- OTC (over the counter) saline nasal sprays help relieve thick congestion and stuffiness. For infants, lay baby on its back and squirt a small amount of saline up each nostril- it is safe for them to swallow or inhale the liquid. You can gently suction out excess mucous with a bulb syringe or the NoseFrida snot-sucker (find at Bed Bath & Beyond.) Saline sprays can be used in older children as often as necessary. **DO NOT USE** over the counter nasal decongestants such as Afrin or neo-synephrine more than 2-3 days, as they can cause rebound congestion when stopped.

Benadryl- a first-generation (sedating) antihistamine that may provide minor relief of congestion, sneezing and watery eyes, can be used in infants and children. Newer antihistamines like Zyrtec and

Allegra are good for allergy, but not for colds. Can use with acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Honey- safe to use for coughs and sore throats in children older than one. 2 teaspoons (10 milliliters) of honey has been found to be as effective as OTC cough medicine in a study of children with upper respiratory infections. Best given straight up, honey coats and soothes an irritated oropharynx.

Pectin cough drops- safe to use in children at least 3 years of age who don't choke easily. Pectin coats the throat, and helps soreness and cough.

Humidification- cold viruses thrive in dry conditions, and dry air also dries mucous membranes causing a stuffy nose and sore throat. Cool mist humidifiers help add moisture to the air- but be sure to clean it daily following the manufacturer's instructions. Sitting in a steamy bathroom for a few minutes also helps loosen secretions and soothe irritated throats. Warm mist humidifiers are fine as well, but can cause steam burns if touched.