

What should I do when I have a sore throat, cough, or cold?

Sore Throat:

- Hot liquids (e.g. honey-lemon tea, soups, hot chocolate)
 - Steam (hot showers)
 - Salt water gargles
 - Cough drops (e.g. Halls) or lozenges (e.g. Sucrets, more numbing) or sprays
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol), two 325 mg tabs every 4 hours or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin), two 200 mg tabs every 4 hours. For more severe throat pain, you may take 3-4 tablets of ibuprofen (200 mg each) every 8 hours. Take ibuprofen with food as the larger dose can upset the stomach.
-

Nasal Congestion:

- Saline nasal spray, as often as needed.
 - Increase fluids, especially hot liquids, to help thin secretions.
 - Oral decongestants (pseudoephedrine is better than phenylephrine). Pseudoephedrine occasionally causes mild side effects in some (feeling jittery or anxious feeling or drowsiness). Pseudoephedrine is only available behind the pharmacy counter (you must show a picture ID).
 - Sinus Rinse with warm saline for prolonged congestion. Available over the counter.
 - Afrin nasal spray, twice daily for 1-3 days. Note that while over the counter and safe to use for up to 3 days, this medicine can be addictive and lead to worsening congestion after 3 days.
-

Chest congestion:

- Guaifenesin (same thing as plain Robitussin or plain Mucinex), Mucinex D (guaifenesin plus pseudoephedrine, behind the counter, see above)
-

Cough Suppression:

- Dextromethorphan (DM), over-the-counter, usually combined with guaifenesin
- Codeine (by prescription only, causes drowsiness), typically used at bedtime. Do not combine with alcohol. Plan to sleep at least 6 hours.
- Antihistamines (e.g. Benadryl, 25mg at bedtime can be effective, but also causes drowsiness).
- Albuterol (Ventolin, Proventil) inhalers, by prescription only, a bronchodilator which opens the lung airways and can significantly improve cough not only in asthmatics, but in many individuals with prolonged cough.