

Be wary of cold medicines for kids

Health Canada is reminding Canadians that over-the-counter cough and cold medicines should not be given to children under the age of 6.

In 2009, Health Canada conducted a review and determined over-the-counter cough and cold products in children have not been shown to be effective. In addition, serious harm, including misuse, overdose and side-effects may occur in children under 6 years of age when using over-the-counter cough and cold products, although the risk of such serious harm is low.

Despite recommendations and labelling on these products, recent reports indicate that children under 6 are still being given cough and cold medications by parents or caregivers. Check out the list of active ingredients in cough and cold products that should be avoided at healthycanadians.gc.ca.

Health Canada reminds parents and caregivers:

- Do not use over-the-counter cough and cold medicines in children under 6.
- Always check the label first to make sure the medication is suitable for your child.
- Do not give children medications labelled only for adults.
- Do not give children aged 6 and up more than one kind

of cough and cold medicine (unless under the advice of a healthcare practitioner). Combining medicines with the same ingredient(s) may cause side effects.

- Talk to your health care practitioner (e.g. doctor, pharmacist, nurse, etc.) if you have any questions about using cough and cold medicines in children. These professionals can also help make sure there are no interactions with other health products your child may be taking.
- A cold is not the same as the flu. Cold medications are not effective against the flu.
- If you have any concern with your child's condition or if symptoms do not improve within 6 to 10 days, or worsen, consult a health care practitioner.
- Consider these non-medicinal measures that may provide temporary relief from the symptoms of coughs and colds:
 - o Allow the child adequate rest
 - o Clear nasal passages;
 - o Ensure plenty of clear fluids (e.g. water, diluted non-sweetened fruit juice, or clear soups) to prevent dehydration while keeping the throat moist; and
 - o Provide a comfortable environment with adequate humidity.

Is it a cold or a fever

Cold Symptoms:

It is rare that a cold is accompanied by a fever or headache and body aches and pains may occur but are mild in nature. Unlike the flu, it is unusual for cold symptoms to include fatigue. What cold sufferers will experience is runny, stuffy nose, sneezing and sore throat. Chest discomfort and coughing are sometimes part of the cold scenario. Complications can include sinus congestion and earache.

Flu symptoms

Headache and sudden onset high fever (102°F/39°C to 104°F/40°C); that lasts 3-4 days are commonly associated with the flu along with general aches and pains, chills, extreme tiredness and weakness in the early stages. Flu sufferers will often develop a sore throat, chest discomfort, coughing and occasionally sneezing.

Complications include pneumonia and respiratory failure and can worsen a current chronic respiratory condition and in some cases the flu can be life-threatening.



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