



Should I Give My Child Medicine for a Cough or Cold?



Overview

Your child has a cough or cold, and you want to help them feel better. But do they need medicine? Are over-the-counter drugs right for kids? Should you get a prescription? Let's learn about your options.

A normal part of life

First, know that most coughs and colds don't turn into anything serious. They're a normal part of life for all kids. A common cold tends to run its course in a week or two, and then go away on its own. And coughs help the body get rid of mucus in the lungs. So coughing can actually be helpful.

Drug dangers

Next, know that over-the-counter cough and cold medicines can be dangerous for kids. They shouldn't be given to a child younger than two. And many prescription cough and cold medicines aren't for kids younger than 18. So follow your doctor's advice about medications. Read warning labels carefully, and follow all of the directions for use.

Home care

Don't forget other remedies for your child's symptoms. A humidifier and saline nose drops can keep nasal passages from getting too dry. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen helps with aches, pains and fever. Make sure your child gets rest and drinks plenty of fluids, too.

Warning signs

And finally, don't ignore serious symptoms. Is your child getting sicker? Do they have a worrisome fever, breathing problems or trouble eating or drinking? These are signs that something is wrong. Call your doctor.

Conclusion

For more information about your child's health, talk to your doctor.