

FDA Cold Medicine Warnings

The FDA has issued a public health advisory about children's cold medicines saying that "questions have been raised about the safety of these products and whether the benefits justify any potential risks from the use of these products in children, especially in children under 2 years of age."

According to the FDA, most problems with cold medicines occur when "more than the recommended amount is used, if it is given too often, or if more than one cough and cold medicine containing the same active ingredient are being used."

Remember that these medicines will not make your child get better any faster. They should be used only if they are making your child feel more comfortable and are not causing bothersome side effects. If your child is not improving after a few days of being on an over-the-counter medicine or if he is getting worse, you should call your doctor.

What should parents know about using cough and cold products in children?

- *Do not use cough and cold medicines in children under 2 years of age UNLESS given specific directions to do so by your Doctor.
- *Too much medicine may lead to serious and life-threatening side effects, particularly in children aged 2 years and younger.
- *Do not give children medicine that is packaged and made for adults. Use only products marked for use in babies, infants and children (sometimes called "pediatric" use).
- *Cough and cold medicines come in many different strengths. If you are unsure about the right product for your child, ask your Doctor.
- *If other medicines are being given to a child, the child's Doctor should review and approve their combined use.
- *Read all of the information in the "Drug Facts" box on the package label so that you know the active ingredients and the warnings.
- *If you do not understand the instructions on the product or how to use the dosing device (dropper, dosing cup or spoon), do not use the medicine and consult with your Doctor. Cough and cold medicines only treat the symptoms of the common cold such as runny nose, congestion, fever, or aches. They do not cure the common cold. Children get better with time.

So, what can a parent use? Honey may be a great solution. In a recent study, honey has been shown to reduce the number and severity of coughs and increase sleep for kids, as well as parents. Only honey was significantly better than no treatment at all. The dose was ½ teaspoon in a single dose 30 minutes before bed for kids 2 to 5 years old, a full teaspoon for kids 6 to 11 years old, and two teaspoons for kids 12 to 18 years old. Darker honeys seem to work best. Just remember...**NO HONEY FOR CHILDREN UNDER 1 YEAR OF AGE** because it may cause a rare type of food poisoning (infant botulism).