





Treating Symptoms Caused by Colds, Covid, Flu, or Other Respiratory Viruses (for those age 18 and older)

Here are some over-the-counter medicines and other ways to treat your symptoms. Have your medical provider or pharmacist check the boxes for treatments that will work best for you. Do not use if the box is not checked.

If you have	✓	Use (active ingredient)	Such as (brand)	Comments
Aches, pain, fever 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acetaminophen	Tylenol	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ibuprofen	Advil, Motrin	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Naproxen	Aleve	
Sore throat 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throat lozenges	Cepacol Throat Lozenges	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throat spray	Chloraseptic Spray	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Herbal tea		
Cough 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guafenesin	Mucinex	Helps thin mucus
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dextromethorphan	Robitussin, Delsym	Cough suppressant
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vaporizer/humidifier		Clean after each use
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Menthol	Vicks Vapor Rub, Cough drops	
Stuffy nose 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Phenylephrine or Pseudoephedrine	Sudafed	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oxymetazoline nasal spray	Afrin, Zicam	Do not use for more than 3 days
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Phenylephrine nasal spray	Neo-Synephrine	Do not use for more than 3 days
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Saline nasal spray		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nasal/Sinus irrigation	Neti Pot	
Allergy symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes, post nasal drip	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fexofenadine, Loratadine, or Cetirizine	Zyrtec, Allegra, Claritin, Alavert	Non-drowsy antihistamines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diphenhydramine, or Chlorpheniramine	ChlorTabs, Chlor-Trimeton, Benadryl	Antihistamines that can cause drowsiness
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fluticasone, Triamcinolone, or Budesonide	Flonase, Nasacort, Rhinocort	Steroid nasal spray
Combination Medications	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acetaminophen, Guafenesin, and Phenylephrine	Multiple products available, check active ingredients	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acetaminophen, Guafenesin, Phenylephrine and Dextromethorphan	Multiple products available, check active ingredients	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ibuprofen and Phenylephrine	Advil Sinus	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cetirizine and Pseudoephedrine	Zyrtec - D	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>			

When using this checklist, remember to:

- Tell your doctor or pharmacist about all medicines you are taking and if you have other health problems like diabetes or high blood pressure.
- Try to use medicines that take care of only the symptoms you have right now. Some medicines treat many symptoms at once. Taking these when you don't have all of the symptoms can cause side effects.
- Acetaminophen [uh-see-tuh-MIN-uh-fen] is the active ingredient (main medicine) in Tylenol and is used in many other medicines. Too much acetaminophen can harm your liver. Don't take more than one medicine at a time that contains acetaminophen.
- Follow the instructions on the back of ALL medicines carefully.
- When you go to the store, you can find a medicine's active ingredient by looking at the "Drug Facts" panel on the back of medicine box or bottle (example below). If you have a hard time finding the medicine, ask a pharmacist for help.

Look on the back of the medicine; the active ingredient is found here



Drug Facts	
Active ingredient (in each tablet)	Purpose
Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg.....	Antihistamine

Other tips or instructions from your healthcare provider:

How long will my symptoms last?

How long your symptoms last depends on your illness. In general you can expect the following:

- **Fever:** Can be 5 days or more (most often 2 to 3 days)
- **Sore throat:** Can be 9 days or more (most often 5 to 6 days)
- **Cough:** Can be several weeks (most often 7 to 14 days)
- **Congestion and runny nose:** Can be 2 weeks or more (most often 5 to 7 days)

If your symptoms last longer than this, call your healthcare provider for an appointment.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- New severe pain
- Persistent or rising temperature
- Chest pain
- Coughing up blood (more than a streak)
- Difficulty breathing
- Confusion or severe drowsiness
- Shaking/ chills

Adapted from Atrium Health
atriumhealth.org/germs

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