

# Sore Throat and Respiratory Symptom Self-Care



## SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE:

- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Runny or congested nose
- Cough
- Blocked or popping ears
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Post nasal drip
- Headaches

## SORE THROAT CARE

- Gargle with salt water several times a day for throat discomfort (1/4 teaspoon regular salt to 1/2 cup warm water)
- Sip warm chicken broth
- Try warm tea with lemon and honey, apple juice, gelatin, or sucking on flavored ice
- Take frequent small sips if it is painful to swallow
- Use cough drops, hard candy, or frozen popsicles for additional relief

## GENERAL THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MAKE YOURSELF FEEL BETTER:

- Rest and Increase your fluid intake
- If you smoke, stop smoking while ill
- Increase humidity of your living space with a vaporizer or humidifier
- Breathe in steam (hot shower)
- Saline nasal spray (Ocean®, Deep Sea®, etc.)  
To moisturize nasal passages. Use as needed
- Nasal/Sinus Irrigation (Sinus Rinse®, NetiPot®)  
Relieves sinus and nasal congestion and promotes drainage.

## Contact Health Services if:

- Temperature is greater than 101 degrees Fahrenheit. Thermometers are available for purchase at the Health Services pharmacy.
- Your symptoms become more severe
- Your symptoms do not improve
- You have questions
- You feel you need to be seen by a medical provider

## About Medications

Many illnesses including “colds” are caused by viruses; antibiotics only affect bacteria, not viruses. To help relieve symptoms, many non-prescription medications are available in the Health Services Pharmacy.

### **\*\*IMPORTANT\*\***

Many multi-symptom medications such as Nyquil, Dayquil, Tylenol Cold and others contain several medications, including acetaminophen (Tylenol), or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), decongestants, and antihistamines. It is very important that you read the contents label to avoid overdosing yourself by using duplicate ingredients.

You should always “read the directions” on all non-prescription medications, including those listed here, to ensure:

- correct dosing
- awareness of any warnings related to the non-prescription medication
- possible interactions with the medications you take on a daily basis
- possible interactions with any health conditions you may have.

### **REMEMBER:**

**Wash your hands frequently and cover your mouth/nose with your sleeve when you sneeze or cough to help prevent the spread germs and bacteria.**



**OVER THE COUNTER COLD AND FLU MEDICATIONS-INGREDIENTS**

MEDICATION	INTENT	DOES IT WORK?	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLES	PRECAUTIONS
Phenylephrine (oral)	Nasal decongestant-stuffy nose, ear pressure	Probably not	Most drug gets metabolized in gut before it enters bloodstream Studies show only minimal effect on nasal congestion	Sudafed PE Dayquil	May cause increased heart rate
Pseudoephedrine	Nasal decongestant	Yes	Leads to constriction of blood vessels in nasal passage, leading to less mucus production	Sudafed Claritin D Allegra D Nexafed	May cause increased heart rate, sleep disturbance, elevated blood pressure Need to ask for it from pharmacist
Guaifenesin	Loosen cough secretions Loosen nasal secretions	Maybe	Loosens mucus and secretions so cough is more effective	Mucinex Robitussin	May cause headache or nausea
Dextromethorphan	Suppression of cough	Yes	Studies have shown benefit in cough reduction at doses of 20-30 mg	Robitussin DM Delsym Mucinex DM Dayquil and Nyquil	Drowsiness A weak narcotic, potential for abuse
Antihistamines: Diphenhydramine Brompheniramine Loratadine Chlorpheniramine Doxylamine	Nasal decongestant Allergies (seasonal rhinitis and skin reactions)	For allergic reactions: Yes  For cold symptoms: Probably not	Block histamine receptors, leading to less "leakage" of fluid from blood vessels and therefore less mucus or swelling	Benadryl Dimetapp Nyquil	Most cause drowsiness Dry mouth and eyes
Oxymetazoline (nasal spray)	Nasal decongestant	Yes	Causes shrinking of the blood vessels in the nose (vasoconstriction) which in turn means less mucus is produced	Vicks Sinex Afrin	May cause nosebleeds Using longer than 3 days can make congestion worse (rebound effect)
Ibuprofen	Pain reliever, fever reducer, antiinflammatory	Yes	Reduces fever Prevents production of molecules that lead to inflammation and pain	Advil and Advil products Motrin Store brands	Can cause nausea, stomach/gastrointestinal bleeding
Acetaminophen NO MORE THAN 3 grams in 24 hours (10 regular strength or 6 extra strength pills)	Acetaminophen NO MORE THAN 3 grams in 24 hours (10 regular strength or 6 extra strength pills)	Yes	Reduces fever Blocks pain	Tylenol Anacin Store brands	May cause rash, nausea, headache Potential liver toxicity

**What's In That Stuff?**

Dayquil Liquid: acetaminophen, dextromethorphan, phenylephrine

Dayquil Severe: acetaminophen, dextromethorphan, guaifenesin, phenylephrine

Nyquil: acetaminophen, dextromethorphan, doxylamine

Nyquil Severe: acetaminophen, dextromethorphan, doxylamine, phenylephrine

Alkaseltzer Plus Cold/Severe Cold/Day/Night: various formulations may contain acetaminophen, aspirin, guaifenesin, dextromethorphan, doxylamine, chlorpheniramine, phenylephrine, and/or pseudoephedrine

Contact a Health Services Triage Nurse at (603) 862-2856

For after hours care, call (603) 862-WELL (9355)

**HEALTH SERVICES**

(603)862-2856 *during hours of operation* | (603) 862-well (9355) *after hours*  
www.unh.edu/health-services

