

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Advisory:

Do Not Use Over-the-Counter Cough and Cold Products to Treat Infants and Children Under 2 Years of Age



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) strongly recommends that over-the-counter (OTC) cough and cold products should not be used for infants and children under 2 years of age because these medications are ineffective and have serious and potentially life-threatening side effects.

A cold is a respiratory illness that usually lasts about a week. Cold symptoms typically include sneezing, coughing, runny or stuffy nose, and sore throat. Children may also experience a fever. The FDA has determined that OTC cough and cold medicines, which treat symptoms and not the underlying condition, have not been shown to be safe or effective in infants and children under 2. Always be sure to check with your doctor about what approaches to take to make your child more comfortable.

OTC cough and cold products include these ingredients: decongestants (for unclogging a stuffy nose), expectorants (for loosening mucus so that it can be coughed up), antihistamines (for sneezing and runny nose), and antitussives (for quieting coughs). The terms on the label include "nasal decongestants", "cough suppressants", "expectorants" and "antihistamines." There are a wide variety of serious adverse events reported with cough and cold products. They include death convulsions, rapid heart rates, and decreased levels of consciousness.

For more information please visit:

- For the Public Health Advisory regarding nonprescription cough and cold medicine use in children: www.fda.gov/cder/drug/advisory/cough-cold-2008.htm
- For questions and answers for consumers:
www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/coughcold011708.html
www.aap.org/new/kidcolds.htm
- People can also contact the Delaware County Department of Intercommunity Health Coordination at www.co.delaware.pa.us or (610) 891-5311.