

Natural Home Remedies

On the following pages you will find an array of home remedies from physicians and alternative health practitioners who recommend them as well as people all over the world who use them. None of these recommendations are intended to replace the advice of your physician or other health care provider. Although no one is as familiar with your body as you, it is never a good idea to act as your own physician. If your symptoms remain after a few days, seek medical advice.

Is your child's ear ache really an infection?

Teething may often be confused with an ear ache. Because of radiating pain from the teeth to the ears babies will often pull on their ears, causing concern of an ear infection. They may also have clear runny mucus draining from the nose, fever, picky eating habits, disruptive sleep patterns and changes in bowel movements. Eighty percent of the time it's actually a new tooth coming in. To tell if your child is cutting new teeth rub your child's gums with your pinky to see if you can find a nubbin. A terry cloth soaked in warm water placed on the cheek and ear can help ease the pain.

If your child does have an ear infection 2-3 drops of olive oil infused with garlic can be dropped in the affected ear followed with a cotton ball 2-3 times/day. Antibiotics are effective treatment for bacterial infections only. A culture needs to be performed in order for your doctor to determine if the infection is bacterial or viral; this can take 24 hours.

Common Cold:

Vinegar and honey, which supposedly restore the body's acid balance, may also head off a cold. For the first two days you have cold symptoms, take a tablespoonful of each in a glass of hot water with a pinch of cayenne pepper every two hours while you're awake. Bundle up warmly-the cayenne helps you sweat out toxins. For a sore throat drink a glass of hot water with one tablespoon of honey and a squeeze of lemon.

Traditional Chinese medicine prescribes warming herbs and spices to be taken at the first sign of a cold. Ginger is most often recommended (check with your health-care provider if you are pregnant). Boil a walnut-sized ginger root, cinnamon stick, ½ teaspoon cloves and a teaspoon coriander seed in a pint of water for about 30 minutes. When you take the mixture from the fire, add a teaspoon each of lemon juice and honey.

Inhaling steam at the first sign of a cold is an ancient and universal strategy. Boil a pot of water, turn off the heat, drape a towel over your head and inhale (a mixture of one part apple cider vinegar two parts water is also recommended). This may kill nasal viruses and break up sinus and lung congestion. A vaporizer filled with three parts apple cider vinegar and one part distilled water also works well.

Babies who drink formula are more prone to catch colds and have much worse colds than babies who don't drink formula. Put a humidifier in the room where your child is most. Be sure to clean your humidifier regularly using white vinegar and fill with a mixture of 3 parts distilled water and one part apple cider vinegar. Onion tea is another good remedy. Boil one pound of onions in two quarts of water for two hours then strain. The tea can be refrigerated for up to one week. For 0-12 months old give 1 tsp 4 times per day (since babies don't have taste buds there is no need to add sugar). For 3+ years old give 1 tbs 4 times per day. It is also recommended to avoid sugar and dairy and boost your vitamin C intake.

Homemade Chicken Soup: The Classic Cold Remedy

Laboratory studies reveal that chicken soup contains ingredients that may reduce the body's inflammation response, as well as the amino acid acetyl cysteine, which thins mucus in the lungs. Some ingredients in the following soup recipe thin mucus; others induce perspiration, build resistance or are antiseptic. The allicin in garlic, a germ killer par excellence, also thins mucus.

To 3 cups chicken stock add 4 garlic cloves, 5 or 6 fresh basil leaves, 1 tablespoon fresh or 1 ½ teaspoons of each or these dried herbs: dill weed, thyme, parsley, marjoram, chervil, a pinch of cayenne pepper and two or three slices fresh or 1 ½ teaspoons dried ginger root. Eat a bowlful as hot as possible at least once a day, preferably at bedtime.

Dry Coughs

- The tickling and irritation that can follow a sore throat may cause a dry cough. Honey is moisturizing and soothes your mucous membranes; syrups and cough drops also help soothe your throat and keep it moist.
- Tea made with red clover, wild cherry bark, licorice root or slippery elm bark and sweetened with honey helps soothe a dry cough.
- An old Russian remedy for dry cough: black tea with lemon and honey, fresh raspberries or raspberry preserves.
- You can also drink concentrated cranberry juice (see recipe below) or use Ivy extract (available at Whole Foods, etc).
- Eliminate animal dander and passive smoking to help with potential irritants.

Hay fever and allergies

Chronic hay fever may be caused by household dust and dust mites (microscopic insects related to spiders) that nourish themselves mainly on particles of sloughed human skin. Dust mite droppings are a common allergen. The preferred hangout of dust mites is your bed, where most shed skin accumulates. Experts recommend a dust-proof mattress cover; pillows and blankets made of synthetic materials; banishing dust catchers such as carpeting and venetian blinds and frequent and thorough housecleaning. To banish dust mites from your pillows, place them in the dryer for ten minutes, every two months.

Mold is another year-round allergen. It grows everywhere outdoors especially in humid climates. Indoors, it grows in houseplant soil and damp rooms such as basements and bathrooms. A dehumidifier will help reduce damp and mold indoors. Be sure to clean them at least once a week with white vinegar.

Pets and their dander are other frequent offenders. If you must keep them, banish them from the bedroom and vacuum frequently.

Food allergies are not always so easy to identify. You could try eliminating certain suspect foods, one at a time, to see if your symptoms improve. Some people are allergic to food additives. Reading food labels is a very useful habit. (See below for more information on food allergies)

A daily cup or two of chamomile tea or tablespoonful of honey gathered from within a ten-mile radius of where you live may help immunize you by the time hay fever season rolls around. If you are allergic to ragweed, begin with only a few teaspoons of chamomile, a botanical relative, and then work up to a cup or more.

In 1998, Women's Health Advocate listed several of the most popular remedies for allergy symptoms. They include Echinacea (unless you are allergic to plants in the aster family), garlic, onion, red wine or grape seeds, which contain quercetin, an anti-inflammatory; vitamin C, which has proven antihistamine effects; stinging nettle leaves, a traditional remedy and a teaspoonful of prepared horseradish, which should clear your sinuses.

Eat lots of curry. Curry powder contains turmeric and ginger, which also have anti-inflammatory properties.

Fever:

Fever is an important part of the body's defense against infection. Although a fever signals that a battle might be going on in the body, the fever is fighting *for* the person, not against. Brain damage rarely occurs with a fever less than 105°F and there is not much literature that fever is truly the cause. Most cases of brain damage are caused by overmedication.

The illness is probably not serious if your child:

- Is still interested in playing
- Is eating and drinking well
- Is alert and smiling at you
- Has a normal skin color
- Looks well when their temperature comes down.

The number of the temperature is not as important as your baby's reaction.

- Temperatures taken rectally are more accurate. An oral or ear temperature reading is usually one degree higher than their actual temperature.

Home Care:

- Do NOT use cold baths, ice or alcohol rubs!
- Do not bundle up someone who has chills. Remove excess clothing or blankets.
- Soak cotton/wool socks in apple cider vinegar before putting them on your feet; this can decrease your fever in five minutes.
- Comfort and monitor your child. You can also place them in a tepid bath (body temperature).
- Drink plenty of fluids, preferably water.
- Do not force foods.

Food Allergies

- Write five things your child would not live without; we eat what makes us sick making this an easy way to start identifying allergies.
- Keep a food diary tracking bowel movements, sinuses, breathing, energy, and general reaction. Most food allergies make us "sick" overtime not just eating one food followed by a reaction such as hives. For long term health, it is more important to determine foods that help us stay healthy versus slowly rob us of general body function in the form of dis-ease and illnesses. Example, leaky gut syndrome the precursor to Chrohn's disease , IBS, occur as small "nicks" or irritation to the lining causing the organ to work improperly versus one event.
- The most common food allergies are wheat (gluten), dairy, soy, peanuts and corn.
- When introducing foods to infants, add one item at a time and gauge reaction instead of many items. This will allow you to determine if you need to wait until their system is more mature to handle this food or avoid altogether.
- The less processed the food is, the less illnesses, food allergies, and overall better health the child will have. Avoid "over substitution"-if your child has a dairy sensitivity, do not overcompensate with soy. Keep the diet well balanced.

Sinus Infections

Poor nutrition is also a factor in some sinus infections. A well balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables is essential. Foods rich in vitamins E and C help build immunity; vitamin A helps protect your mucous membranes. Limit or eliminate mucus-producing dairy products, meats, starches and eggs.

The use of a neti-pot (available at Target, Walgreen's, GNC and Wal-Mart) can help irrigate your nasal passages and rinse allergens. You can also use apple cider vinegar as listed above under "*cold*"s.

Asthma:

Cranberry tea is a great remedy for asthma sufferers. Boil one pound of frozen or fresh cranberries in two quarts of water for two hours then strain. The juice/water that is left over is your tea.

- For 0-12 month -olds: give ½ tsp, 4 times per day.
- For 1-3 year- olds: give 1 tsp, 4 times per day.
- For 3+ year-olds: give ½ TB, 4 times per day.