



## Pediatric Clinic

### OVERDOSING on Cough and Cold Medicines

If your child has a cough or cold symptoms, be careful about using over the counter medicines to treat. Many cough and cold medicines have ingredients that are not appropriate to give children, especially children under the age of 2 years.

Avoid giving more than one kind of cough/cold medicine at a time and give only medicine that treats your child's specific symptoms.

Many cough and cold medicines have the same or only slightly different ingredients. Giving more than one kind at a time can easily OVERDOSE your child which, in some cases, can lead to death.

Here are some basic guidelines for treating your child's cold at home:

- Use nasal saline (Baby Ayr™, or Little Noses™) to wash your child's nose and clear his airway. This is especially important for babies, because they primarily breathe through their nose and not their mouth. A very congested nose can cause oxygen levels to go down. Clearing the nose with saline will help open them up. You may not even need any medicine.
- Use a humidifier while they sleep, especially since you live here in a very dry climate. This will help their nose, sinuses, and lungs.
- Drink plenty of fluids, because it is so dry here, if babies or children are breathing faster than normal with a cold, they can get dehydrated by blowing off a lot of moisture from their lungs.
- COLD MEDICINES:
  - ALWAYS read the directions every single time you give a dose of medicine
  - KNOW your child's weight. Cold medicines are dosed by weight in children
  - READ the ingredients. Make sure that you are NOT giving Tylenol™ (Acetaminophen) to your child as an extra medicine for fever or pain if there is also Tylenol™ (Acetaminophen) in your child's cold medicine (and there usually is!) This will OVERDOSE your child on Acetaminophen (Tylenol). The same goes for Ibuprofen (Advil™, Motrin™).
  - READ the ingredients in ALL the medications you give your child to be POSITIVE that you are not doubling up on any ingredient.
  - USE the dosing cup or syringe provided with your child's medicine. Understand the markings.
  - ALWAYS call your Medical Provider if you are unsure about dosing or ingredients
  - FINALLY: if your child's condition seems to get worse, they have difficulty breathing despite cleaning out the nose, are breathing faster (more than 40 breaths per minute), or seem to be working much harder to breathe, retracting between the ribs a lot, then bring your child to the doctor immediately.

Babies and Children under 2 years of age die every year from overdosing of Tylenol, Ibuprofen, and Cough/Cold medicines. This tragedy can be PREVENTED! Please let us assist you with treating your child. Call the Pediatrics Clinic, Secure Message your Primary Care Medical Home Provider, or the Nurse Advice Line for assistance.

[http://www.uptodate.com/contents/giving-your-child-over-the-counter-medicines-the-basics?source=see\\_link](http://www.uptodate.com/contents/giving-your-child-over-the-counter-medicines-the-basics?source=see_link)