

COLD AND FLU - ADULT

Cold symptoms: A runny nose, sneezing, coughing, blocked nose, nasal pain, hoarse voice and general sense of feeling unwell. Symptoms develop over 1-2 days and can last for up to 14 days. In children you may also get a raised temperature.

Flu symptoms: are usually sudden and severe in onset; include those of a cold and sudden fever (38°C and above), headache, tiredness, chills, aching muscles, limb or joint pain, diarrhoea/upset stomach, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping. Symptoms peak after 2-3 days but full recovery can be up to 10 days, although people can feel tired for longer

For more information:
NHS Choices
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cold-common/pages/introduction.aspx>



Pharmacist should refer to a clinician if the customer present with any of the following Red Flags

- **Raised temperature** - Persistent raised temperature - (39°C and above) for longer than 3 days
- **Severe headache with vomiting or severe earache**
- **Hearing** - Problems develop with hearing
- **Confusion** - Experiencing confusion or is disorientated
- **Coughing blood** - Coughing up blood/blood stained mucus on more than one occasion
- **Chest pain**
- **Severe difficulty swallowing or breathing difficulties**
- **Swelling of lymph nodes in neck and/or armpits**
- **Take care with** children under 1, over 65s, those that are pregnant or breastfeeding
- **Severe symptoms in those with a long term medical conditions** –Particular care should be taken in those who have diabetes, heart disease, respiratory problems including COPD, kidney disease, and those with a compromised immune system

Always follow WWHAM protocol and advise to read PIL before taking any medicine

Significant interactions/warnings

Sympathomimetics:

- MAOI – risk of hypertensive crisis. This interaction can occur up to 2 weeks after an MAOI has been stopped so need to establish any discontinued medication
- Moclobamide – risk of hypertensive crisis

Antihistamines:

- Opioid analgesics /alcohol/hypnotics/sedatives - enhanced sedative effect
- Antivirals – enhances antihistamine effect

Ibuprofen:

- May exacerbate asthma
- Corticosteroids/anticoagulants can increase risk of GI ulceration or bleeding
- Warfarin – may increase risk of bleeding
- Do not take with any other NSAIDs or if allergic to any NSAIDs

Please refer to the British National Formulary and individual product packaging for cautions and contra- indications

Self care advice:

- **Protect yourself and others** against cold and flu by:
 - Wash your hands regularly and properly especially after touching your nose or mouth and before handling food
 - Always sneeze and cough into tissues, use disposable paper towels to dry your hands and face rather than shared towels
 - Clean surfaces regularly
 - Ensure you and your family have a yearly flu jab so that you are protected
- **Drink** – Drink plenty of fluids and get plenty of rest
- **Rest** – Get plenty of rest and sleep with your head on a raised pillow if your nose is blocked at night
- **Smoking** - Avoid smoking or being around smoky atmospheres

Treatment option ONE

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Oral analgesics

Paracetamol 500mg

Adults and children over 12 years: 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours, as required. No more than 8 tablets in 24 hours.
Paracetamol products can be used up to their maximum dose for up to 3 days.

Ibuprofen 200mg

Adults and children over 12 years: 1 - 2 tablets with water, up to three times daily as required. Leave at least 4 hours between doses. Do not take more than 6 tablets in 24 hours.
Ibuprofen products are best taken with or after food and they can be used up to their maximum dose for up to 10 days in adults.

Analgesics and antipyretics help to reduce pain and fever associated with colds. Ibuprofen also reduces inflammation which can help if sinuses are inflamed. Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be used in conjunction with one another and are safe to be taken at the same time, however there is benefit in taking them 2-3 hours apart.

Additional treatment options

Decongestants:
e.g. oxymetazoline, xylometazoline,
phenylephrine and
pseudoephedrine

Decongestants can be used up to their maximum dose for up to a WEEK. Treatment should NOT exceed ONE WEEK. Once symptoms have resolved treatment should be discontinued. If symptoms do not improve after ONE WEEK of continuous treatment then refer to pharmacist.

Nasal sprays and oral tablets should not be used concurrently.

Combination products -
paracetamol, ibuprofen +
antihistamine or decongestant

Combination products are available and these can contain: decongestants, analgesic, cough suppressant and an expectorant. These can be used up to their maximum dose for up to 7 days. If symptoms do not improve after ONE WEEK of continuous treatment then refer to pharmacist.

Combination products containing sedating antihistamines can be used up to their maximum dose for up to THREE DAYS.

Inhalants, vapor rubs and saline
products

Inhalants, rubs and saline products can be used daily until the symptoms are cleared. These can be used as an alternative for patients who have a contraindication to decongestants.

Decongestants help to reduce nasal congestion by constricting the dilated blood vessels in the nasal mucosa. This reduces swelling and oedema of the nasal mucosa thus making it easier to breathe. They are not suitable for pregnant and breast feeding women and patients with hypertension. Sales of pseudoephedrine are restricted to 720mg in one transaction. Antihistamines work by drying up nasal secretions and should be used with a decongestant as they are ineffective on their own. They can also cause drowsiness so are often found in combination products to aid insomnia associated with having a cold.
Inhalants work by helping clear the nasal passages whilst the steam will help ease congestion by loosening mucus so that reduces nasal congestion.
Saline preparations relieve congestion by helping to liquefy mucous secretions which makes it easier to blow your nose.
Care must be taken when multiple remedies are used at the same time that daily doses are not exceeded.

Follow-up Treatment – Pharmacist only

Always follow WWHAM protocol and advise to read PIL before taking any medicine

Oral analgesics

Paracetamol 500mg

Adults and children over 12 years: 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours, as required. No more than 8 tablets in 24 hours.
If symptoms persist paracetamol products can be used up to their maximum dose for up to 14 days.

Ibuprofen 200mg

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