

**NASAL SALINE SPRAY** = mechanical common sense for cold and allergies = breathed air is filtered in the nose and germs or allergens are stuck there = flush them out daily when brushing teeth, instead of sleeping with them.

Very significant studies in children and adults recently showed its preventive effect if used twice a day all winter or during allergy season. **NasaMist** is sterile and buffered with bicarbonate/baking soda, to reduce painful irritation.

**Hypertonic** formulations help to shrink swollen, inflamed tissues, and help drain mucous to reduce Eustachian tube congestion and post-nasal drip, both main factors of cough and ear infection in children.

**VITAMIN D** = needs to be given all year, since suntan or sunburn prevent its natural skin production from the sun. Besides boosting the immunity against winter germs, it also helps prevent seasonal depression. Daily doses start at 400 IU for infants, up to 600 IU at 4 years and up, and 800-1,000 IU for adolescents and adults. Doses can be given weekly (respectively 3,000, 4,000 and 5-6,000/week)

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**Humidifiers** do not prevent illness but facilitate breathing and expectoration in cold, dry weather conditions, and should be set in the comfort zone of about 30-35% humidity.

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## Cold & Flu

## Prevention

## Tips

### 2021-2022



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As the Covid-19 pandemic continues its course, other viruses can complicate the situation. Covid vaccine is the only proven defense and is recommended for all eligible patients. The Flu vaccine has now been shown to reduce severity of Covid-19. Seasonal epidemic flu in Westchester usually appears from mid-December until March. Local weekly information on the flu is available here: <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/surveillance/>

*Tamiflu* is rarely useful in healthy children, and should be reserved for the fragile and unvaccinated patients at risk for severe complications and hospitalized.

Beyond washing hands with soap and water, and basic hygiene, recent clinical studies showed very clearly that 5 major **preventive** factors each help reduce the frequency, duration and complications of Upper Respiratory Infections, cold or flu-like infections.

\* \* \*

**Sleep** = lack of sleep is a major risk factor, and has become very prevalent in today's children!

**Zinc** = 10-15 mg/day found in *Flintstone Complete* or *Centrum Kids* (NOT the Gummy type) or equivalent type of multivitamin; can also be taken by itself too (that's still more than lots of meat or lentils daily...)

**Nasal Saline Spray** = **Isotonic** twice a day **all winter**; use the **Hypertonic** Saline to treat congestion or runny nose. The *NasaMist* brand contains bicarbonate and reduces irritation and stinging = much more comfortable!

**Probiotic mix of acidophilus and bifidus**; e.g. *Prima-dophilus Reuteri*; ¼ - ½ tsp twice a day **all winter**, mixed with apple sauce, yogurt or milk (or 1 Chewable or capsule twice a day)

**Vitamin D**: Grand-ma's Cod Liver Oil has regained its immune boosting effects through daily or weekly intake of Vitamin D3.

\* \* \*

In children, the most common and difficult symptom is cough, and complications include earache and sometimes ear infection:

**Cough in children** is almost always due to post-nasal drip, except in bronchiolitis and asthma (small bronchi in lungs), or croup and of course Strep (throat, trachea and possible pneumonia).

Bacterial pneumonia and bronchitis have become extremely rare since vaccination with Hib and Prevnar.

Pertussis is once again on the rise: vaccination is essential for children and their parents and care-givers. Treatment is purely supportive, death common in infants.

If **mucous** gets trapped in the Eustachian tube then in the middle ear, it can lead to pain from barometric pressure changes, or infection when germs are trapped and grow in the middle ear. In children, the Eustachian tube is quite small, easily congested with inflammation and secretions, and fairly horizontal, meaning poorly self draining: raising the head of the mattress, sleeping propped up, will therefore reduce pressure in the middle ear and promote drainage.



*Eustachian tube = inflamed and fills with mucous secretions, especially if large adenoids prevent drainage*

**Prevention of ear infection** and initial treatment therefore include hypertonic saline nasal spray to unplug and drain the Eustachian tubes and clear the adenoids.

Expectorants like *Mucinex* "Cold & Stuffy Nose" or mostly diluted **HONEY**, will help to loosen the secretions. Homeopathic cough syrups like *Chestal* or *B&T* can also help.

Ibuprofen is for pain and anti-inflammatory effect.

Homeopathic medicines can also be very effective. Antibiotics are rarely needed but can be necessary

**SLEEP** = Children need a steady and consistent sleep routines at all ages, **taught and implemented by parents**. Optimal Sleep requirements:

2 yr =	12 hours
4 yr =	11 hours
6 yr =	10.5 hours
8 yr =	10 hours
10-12 yr =	9.5 hours
14-16 yr =	9 hours

**Major myth** = children do not go to bed when they are tired; parents need to teach proper routines.

**Clinical tip** = if children stay up beyond their necessary bedtime, they are in an adrenaline-driven "fight-mode", equivalent to drinking 2 Espressos (!), and falling asleep gets more difficult.

**Reality check** = Falling asleep immediately, in less than 10 minutes, is a clinical sign of sleep deprivation.

**ZINC** = helps the body to fight viruses and bacteria, and help skin to heal (zinc oxide for diaper rash). Several studies have shown a preventive effect against severe bacterial infections in children, and an increasing effect on antibiotic treatment in pneumonias. Recent studies in 2012 in France showed how white blood cells use zinc to destroy bacteria and viruses, and new generations of antibiotics and antiviral drugs will likely use this concept.

Hard to find in children's diet who do not eat enough red meat or whole grains. Added to baby cereals and good multivitamins (Centrum Kids, non-gummy Flintstone Complete)

**PROBIOTICS** = used in Europe for decades, in yogurt or supplements. Initial studies on infants in daycare for prevention of diarrhea showed significant reduction of runny nose, ear infections and use of antibiotics. Repeat study in older children confirmed significant reduction of days missed from cold and flu symptoms, fever, use of antibiotics for complications. Immunity starts in the gut, and in Chinese medicine sinus congestion comes from weak colon.

**Dose is increased when upset GI tract, from diarrhea to IBS, and the prevention of winter "stomach flu", including Rotavirus, and "traveler's diarrhea" is very effective.**