



H1N1 INFORMATION

Medications to Help Lessen Symptoms of the Flu

This information was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and should not replace discussions with your health care provider or pharmacist.

Antiviral medications can sometimes help lessen influenza symptoms, but require a prescription. Most people do not need these antiviral drugs to fully recover from the flu.

However, persons at higher risk for severe flu complications, or those with severe flu illness who require hospitalization, might benefit from antiviral medications. Antiviral medications are available for persons 1 year of age and older. Ask your health care provider whether you need antiviral medication.

Do **not** give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye Syndrome. According to the National Reye's Syndrome Foundation, the cause and cure of Reye Syndrome remain unknown. Research has established a link between Reye Syndrome and the use of aspirin and other salicylate containing medications, over-the-counter products, and topical use products. Visit <http://www.reyessyndrome.org/> for more information.

- Check ingredient labels on over-the-counter medications to see if they contain aspirin. Fevers and aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®) or naproxen. Examples of these kinds of medications include:

| Generic Name | Brand Name(s) |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| Acetaminophen | Tylenol® |
| Ibuprofen | Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin® |
| Naproxen | Aleve |

Over-the-counter cold and flu medications used according to the package instructions may help lessen some symptoms such as cough and congestion. Importantly, these medications will not lessen how infectious a person is. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that over-the-counter cough and cold medicines not be used to treat infants and children less than 2 years of age. Giving these products to these children can cause serious and potentially life-threatening side effects. The FDA knows of reports of serious side effects from over-the-counter cough and cold medicines in children 2 to 11 years of age but is still completing their review of information about the safety of these products in children of this age. Please consult your health care provider regarding the use of over-the-counter cough and cold medicines for your child.

Check the ingredients on the package label to see if the medication already contains acetaminophen or ibuprofen before taking additional doses of these medications—don't double dose! Patients with kidney

disease, liver disease, or stomach problems should check with their health care provider before taking over-the-counter medications like non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications or acetaminophen. .

Check with your health care provider or pharmacist if you are taking other over-the-counter or prescription medications not related to the flu.