OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION TO HELP YOUR SYMPTOMS

Many over-the-counter medications are combination or multi-symptoms medications. We recommend individual products so you can target the symptoms you have, but if you’re using a multi-symptom product and an individual product in addition, read ingredients to make sure you’re not accidentally getting a “double dose.”

General symptom relief:
1. Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen (e.g. Motrin® or Advil®) or Naproxen (Aleve®) for fever, aches and/or sore throat (aspirin isn’t recommended because of the risk of Reye’s syndrome)
2. Get plenty of rest and stay hydrated.

For nasal or sinus congestion:
1. Try elevating the head of your bed.
2. Steam or mist inhalation.
3. Nasal irrigation with normal saline (salt water)
4. Decongestant pill — pseudoephedrine (e.g. Sudafed®) is probably more effective than phenylephrine (Sudafed PE®). You have to sign for pseudoephedrine at a pharmacy but you do not need a prescription. Pseudoephedrine can interfere with sleep if taken too late in the day and should not be combined with many meds for ADHD. See package directions for other drug interactions.
5. Decongestant nose spray such as oxymetazoline (e.g. Afrin®) or phenylephrine. Use for no more than 3 days.
6. Guaifenesin (e.g. Mucinex®) — may help some people.

For cough, especially if it’s keeping one awake at night:
1. Cough suppressants such as dextromethorphan (e.g. Delsym®)
2. Cough suppressants with both dextromethorphan and an antihistamine (e.g. Nyquil®) may help one sleep at night.

For sore throat:
1. Gargle with warm salt water. Mix 1 teaspoon of salt into a large glass of warm water and gargle several times/day.
2. Ice chips, sore throat spray (e.g. Chloraseptic®), or lozenges
3. Acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or naproxen to relieve pain or fever.

More information on over the counter symptom relief: www.cdc.gov/getsmart/antibiotic-use/symptom-relief