



What You Should Know About Kids And Cough And Cold Medicines By Melinda L. Ragins, M.D., MPH

For a parent, it can be miserable to watch your child suffer through a cold. She or he can't sleep, won't eat and may be burning up with fever. And, now with H1N1 influenza virus, parents are even more anxious and worried about how to care for their children. Here is information to guide you through the treatment options.

Most parents know that antibiotics do not help treat the common cold or influenza. Many parents have turned to over-the-counter (OTC) cough and cold preparations to provide relief for their children. Many infant cough and cold preparations, however, are being removed from the market in response to a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) review. In January 2008, the FDA advised that OTC cough and cold medications not be given to children younger than two. This advisory applies to medications that include cough suppressants, expectorants, antihistamines and decongestants. The FDA is still reviewing the use of OTC cough and cold medicines for children ages 2 to 11 years.

Why has the FDA taken this action? Mostly because these medicines provide limited benefits with potentially rare, but serious, side effects. Moreover, the common cold will eventually run its course and does not cause permanent damage to the body. Also, the FDA is concerned about overdose when many preparations contain similar ingredients with different names or when parents use both prescription and OTC products.

Multiple studies have shown no benefit to using cough medications. Dextromethorphan is the most common medicine used for cough



Studies show that the most common cough medication is no more effective than sugar water.

suppression. Studies show, however, that dextromethorphan is no more effective than sugar water. Sugar water has very few side effects while dextromethorphan can cause sleepiness, dry mouth and thicken the mucous in the throat and chest. Dextromethorphan has been implicated in rare cases of dystonia, a type of unusual muscle contraction in the face and neck, hallucinations and rapid heartbeat.

Antihistamines such as diphenhydramine, better known as Benadryl, are also not effective at providing cough relief. The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages the use of antihistamines as a sleep aid. It is easy and risky to overdose a child on antihistamines, which can lead to over sedation, dry nose and mouth,

abdominal pains and hallucinations. Antihistamines are effective in treating acute allergic reactions; this is their proper role.

In January 2007, the FDA warned that overdoses of pseudoephedrine (a common decongestant such as Sudafed) was the cause of at least three infant deaths in 2005. These children were taking multiple products and had drug levels 9 to 14 times the expected levels. Each death was ruled an accident.

So, what is a parent to do? First, pain management is a priority. Many parents tell me that after hearing the FDA warning, they did not know if pain medicine was okay for their children. Unfortunately, some

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news stories showed products such as Tylenol Plus being removed from the shelves. Pain and fever medicines such as acetaminophen, better known as Tylenol, and ibuprofen, known as Advil or Motrin are not included in the FDA advisory. Pain should absolutely be treated.

Fever management is also important. Fever is the human body's response to infection. A fever might make us uncomfortable, but it can destroy viruses. When a child has a fever, but is comfortable and active, treating the fever is not always necessary. If a child is acting ill, take the temperature and treat a fever with acetaminophen for infants younger than 6 months or acetaminophen or ibuprofen for older children. Please call your child's doctor if she or he is younger than 3 months old and has a fever.

Chicken soup is good for the soul and for the common cold, too. Clear warm fluids help to loosen phlegm and soothe a sore throat. Nasal saline, along with nasal suctioning, can help with nose congestion. A study published in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine showed that buckwheat honey provided significantly more cough relief than dextromethorphan or placebo. Honey, however, has been known to carry the spores of the bacteria that cause infant botulism and should never be given to an infant younger than 12 months. For older children it is worth trying for temporary cough relief. Human touch has also been shown to be beneficial to anyone who is ill.

Remember that careful hand washing is critical to preventing the spread of infection. Whenever possible, one caregiver should be selected to care for a sick child and try to keep that child isolated from other children in the household. Keep your child home from school until the fever is gone for more than 24 hours. Most children with a cold or flu can be treated at home, however, if your child has fever for more than 3 days, has difficulty breathing, has mainly a sore throat with fever or has a chronic condition like asthma, please contact your child's doctor.

Dr. Melinda Ragins is a board-certified pediatrician who practices in Bay Valley Medical Group's Hayward and Castro Valley offices.

Bay Valley Medical Group Welcomes New Physicians To Hayward Office

We are very pleased to announce that three new primary care physicians have joined Bay Valley Medical Group's Hayward office. This expansion of our Hayward internal and family medicine department enables us to offer patients a wide choice of primary care doctors. Please join us in welcoming the following physicians.



Jaya Karnani, M.D., Family Medicine
 Dr. Karnani practices family medicine, with four years of experience in private practice prior to joining Bay Valley Medical Group. Dr. Karnani attended medical school at Kasturba Medical College in India and completed her residency at the Fort Wayne Medical Education Program in Indiana. She is board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. Dr. Karnani is fluent in Hindi. She enjoys taking care of everyone from babies to grandparents. Dr. Karnani's hobbies include cooking, traveling, reading and watching movies.



Pandora Lee, M.D., Internal Medicine
 Dr. Lee is an internist with twelve years of experience in multi-specialty medical groups and as a hospitalist. Dr. Lee attended medical school at Tulane University, School of Medicine in New Orleans, Louisiana and completed her residency at the Alton Ochsner Medical Foundation, also in New Orleans. She is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine. Dr. Lee speaks Cantonese and Spanish. She enjoys reading and spending time with her husband and daughter.



Razia Rangwala, M.D., Family Medicine
 Dr. Rangwala is a board-certified family medicine physician. She attended medical school at Ravindra Nath Tagore Medical College, University of Rajasthan in India and completed a master of surgery in obstetrics/gynecology. Upon relocating to the United States, Dr. Rangwala pursued a career in family medicine and completed her residency at San Joaquin General Hospital in French Camp, California. Dr. Rangwala speaks Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Gujarati. In her free time, she likes to listen to Indian classical music and paint.

Meet Our Medical Staff

This section of our newsletter is intended to help you become more familiar with our medical staff. Highlighted below is a profile of several of our newer doctors. We will feature additional individuals in upcoming issues.



Rama Polisetty, M.D.

Obstetrics & Gynecology

Dr. Polisetty practices obstetrics and gynecology in the Hayward office. She attended medical school at Andhra Medical School, Visakhapatnam, AP, India and completed her residency at the White Memorial Center in Los Angeles. Dr. Polisetty speaks Telugu and Hindi. She enjoys spending time with her husband and two young children as well as swimming and traveling.



Viktor Y. Novikov, M.D.

Family Medicine

Dr. Novikov practices family medicine in the Danville office. He attended medical school at National Medical University and completed a radiology residency at the Kiev Academy of Postgraduate Education, Kiev, Ukraine. Upon relocating to the United States, he completed a family medicine residency at Robert Packer Hospital and subsequently practiced at Robert Packer Hospital/Guthrie Clinic, Sayre, Pennsylvania. Dr. Novikov is board-certified by

the American Board of Family Medicine. He is fluent in Russian and Ukrainian. Dr. Novikov is married with a young daughter and enjoys his family, home remodeling, electronics and computers.



Melinda Lee Ragins, M.D., M.P.H.
Pediatrics

Dr. Ragins is a pediatrician practicing in the Hayward and Castro Valley offices. She received her medical degree at Loyola University Medical Center, Marywood, Illinois and a master's of public health from University of Illinois at Chicago. After completing her residency at Harbor UCLA Medical Center, she moved to northern California and joined Bay Valley Medical Group in Hayward in 2003. Dr. Ragins is board-certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and is conversant in medical Spanish. She enjoys spending time with her husband, son and daughter and loves to read.



Renu Deshpande, M.D.

Family Medicine

Dr. Deshpande practices family medicine in the Danville office. She attended medical school at Mysore Medical College and ophthalmology residency at Minto Regional Institute, Bangalore University, India. She completed her family medicine residency at Kern Medical Center in Bakersfield, California at the University of California, Irvine. She is board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. Dr. Deshpande speaks Hindi, Kannada and basic Spanish. Her hobbies include cooking, Indian classical music, reading, gardening, watching Indian movies and yoga.

TOUGH TIMES?

Bay Valley Medical Group understands that these tough economic times present financial challenges for many patients. If you find yourself without health insurance, please note that BVMG accepts cash-pay and we will work with individuals to set up an affordable payment plan.

In addition, all Bay Valley Medical Group offices accept many types of insurance including most PPOs, private, fee-for-service, Medicare, Health Net Seniority Plus and most HMO plans. Bay Valley Medical Group also accepts MediCal for individuals who have been seen previously at BVMG and are established with one of our offices. If your insurance has changed, you are probably still eligible to be cared for at Bay Valley Medical Group.

For more information about the insurances we accept or to arrange for financial assistance for care you are currently receiving, please call the customer service department at (510) 785-5000. We are happy to help you.



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What Is A Family Medicine Physician?



Family medicine physicians are trained to take care of the whole family.

Family medicine physicians are primary care doctors and can care for people of *all* ages. They are trained to take care of the whole family—children, adults and grandparents. They have specialized in the medical treatment of diseases in children and adults and are oriented to family dynamics and care. They have usually also been trained in performing minor, office-based surgical procedures. Many family physicians also provide care for their patients in the hospital. Their board-certification is through the American Board of Family Medicine. As providers, they enjoy getting to know the whole family. Family medicine doctors offer patients an opportunity to feel comfortable knowing that there is one provider for the entire family. You can even coordinate appointments so that you and your spouse or child(ren) can be seen together. Bay Valley Medical Group's family medicine physicians are well qualified to serve as your advocate and as your doctor. For assistance in selecting just the right physician for you, contact customer service at 510-785-5000.

Bay Valley Medical Group To Launch Newly Re-designed Website

Bay Valley Medical Group will launch its newly re-designed website in the next few weeks. New features are being added to make the site more robust and user-friendly for its visitors. The all-new *News and Events* section will include community events, physician lectures and health care articles. In addition, links to pediatric advice, preventive health guidelines, adult/children's health and up-to-date health care articles will be added to the website. Visitors will be able to search for a Bay Valley Medical Group physician in the *Physician Directory* as well as explore all of the services that Bay Valley provides. Please bookmark and plan on visiting our new website at www.bayvalleymedicalgroup.com.