



Treating coughs, colds and sore throats in the breastfeeding mum

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Colds and 'flu

- The average adult has 2-4 colds a year but in families with children the incidence is higher as children bring colds home from nursery and school
- 'Flu is different and normally only strikes once in a season after which we develop an immunity – hence why we can vaccinate

Symptoms of a cold

- blocked or runny nose
- sore throat
- headaches
- muscle aches
- coughs
- sneezing
- a raised temperature
- pressure in your ears and face
- loss of taste and smell

Spreading the cold virus

- Colds are caused by viruses and easily spread to other people. You're infectious until all your symptoms have gone. This usually takes a week or two.
- Colds are spread by germs from coughs and sneezes which can live on hands and surfaces for 24 hours.
- To reduce the risk of spreading a cold:
 - wash your hands often with warm water and soap
 - use tissues to trap germs when you cough or sneeze
 - bin used tissues as quickly as possible

Symptoms of 'flu

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills >38°
- Cough.
- Sore throat.
- Runny or stuffy nose.
- Muscle or body aches.
- Headaches.
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

IF YOUR HEATTHROB MUSIC IDOL OR POP STAR CAME TO THE DOOR AND YOU COUDNT GET OUT OF BED – YOU PROBABLY HAVE 'FLU

How to tell the difference between a cold and 'flu (NHS)

Flu	Cold
Appears quickly within a few hours	Appears gradually
Affects more than just your nose and throat	Affects mainly your nose and throat
Makes you feel exhausted and too unwell to carry on as normal	Makes you feel unwell, but you're OK to carry on as normal (for example, go to work)

Treatment colds and 'flu

To relieve temperature

- Paracetamol
- Ibuprofen
- Cool baths or showers
- Lots of watery drinks
- Rest and sleep whenever possible
- If you are breastfeeding DO NOT use a decongestant tablet / drink as they can reduce your supply by 24% after one dose
- Inhale steam or use a saline or decongestant nasal spray/drop
- Echinacea, Vitamin C, Zinc

Treatment of cough

- Cough medicines and syrups DO NOT CURE a cough but can help to relieve symptoms. Many people spend a considerable amount of money every year on their favourite remedy – there is little evidence of efficacy but if they make you feel better that is ok.
- For a chesty cough – one containing guaifenesin will help thin mucus
- For a tickly cough with no phlegm on the chest – Simple Linctus or Pholcodeine will help soothe
- AVOID medicines which say “may make you drowsy” as they may sedate your baby and lower supply
- AVOID any multiple ingredient medicine which contains a decongestant
- Inhaling steam will help loosen phlegm and stop you coughing as much.

Sore throat remedies

- Lozenges to soothe a sore throat can be taken during breastfeeding – there are a variety containing a local anaesthetic e.g. Strepsils[®], Dequadin[®], Tyrozets[®] which can be sucked to numb the throat
- Local anaesthetic sprays can be used by a breastfeeding mother e.g. Chloraspetic[®], Difflam[®], own brand equivalents
- Cough sweets e.g. Locketts[®], Throaties[®], Halls[®], Fisherman's Friend[®], Jackmans[®], Strepsils[®] etc

When to speak to a doctor?

- If you are asthmatic and finding it hard to breathe
- Your temperature doesn't go down despite full strength, regular paracetamol and ibuprofen
- Your cough has lasted more than 2-3 weeks and isn't improving
- You are continuing to vomit
- You have significant pain in your sinus when you bend down which isn't improving with steam and decongestant/saline drops/spray
- You feel significantly unwell and have a "gut" feeling this isn't normal

Summary

- Coughs and colds are common
- Having a 'flu vaccine decreases your chance of catching 'flu
- Simple analgesics normally help you feel better in a couple of days
- Decongestant tablets/liquids should be avoided by breastfeeding women but can use decongestant spray/drops or saline spray/drops
- Simple remedies help to soothe sore throats e.g honey and lemon
- Commercial products for sore throat and cough are available
- If both you and your breastfed baby are poorly you can both take your normal doses of paracetamol and ibuprofen

Contact

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