

Cough and Cold Medicines for Infants and Children Withdrawn

If you have not heard by now, you soon will learn the decision of pharmaceutical companies to withdraw cough and cold medicines for infants and children under 2 years of age.

The reason for this unusual step is the evidence from controlled trials show that these products are not effective in children under 6 and can have potentially serious side effects. Childrens' dosage guidelines for cold and cold mixtures were extrapolated from adult data and thus have proved to be inaccurate for children.

According to the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), the cough and cold medicines that are being withdrawn are:

- Dimetapp(R) Decongestant Plus Cough Infant Drops,
- Dimetapp(R) Decongestant Infant Drops,
- Little Colds(R) Decongestant Plus Cough,
- Little Colds(R) Multi-Symptom Cold Formula,
- PEDIACARE(R) Infant Drops Decongestant (containing pseudoephedrine),
- PEDIACARE(R) Infant Drops Decongestant & Cough (containing pseudoephedrine),
- PEDIACARE(R) Infant Dropper Decongestant (containing phenylephrine),
- PEDIACARE(R) Infant Dropper Long-Acting Cough,
- PEDIACARE(R) Infant Dropper Decongestant & Cough (containing phenylephrine),
- Robitussin(R) Infant Cough DM Drops,
- Triaminic(R) Infant & Toddler Thin Strips(R) Decongestant,
- Triaminic(R) Infant & Toddler Thin Strips(R) Decongestant Plus Cough,
- TYLENOL(R) Concentrated Infants' Drops Plus Cold,
- TYLENOL(R) Concentrated Infants' Drops Plus Cold & Cough.

Pediatric & Adolescent Health Partners providers have always been very careful in the suggestion or prescribing of these medications.

Treatment of colds and upper respiratory infections should include plenty of fluids, rest, the use of a bulb syringe to clear nasal passages, and in some instances saline nose drops. Actually, most coughs will resolve without the use of any medication.

For the common cold, your provider may initially use an antihistamine-decongestant product to treat an acute cough. This is done in an effort to stop the flow of mucus that causes the congestion and the cough. We all know the problems associated with a sick child that cannot sleep due to a night time cough. In those cases your provider may suggest the use of a cough suppressant. These products may also be helpful in coughs that last longer than the acute cough, such as the cough that is often associated with bronchitis.

In cases of asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia and other chronic lung problems, you should always see or talk to your provider.

The bottom line is that we actually discourage the use of cough and cold products in children. The risk of overdose is real, especially in children under the age of two. Hydration, saline nose drops, and home humidification still remain the best and safest treatment choices.

If you choose to use any product, ***read the directions and the contents carefully.*** Many medications contain the same ingredients even though the name and box may look totally different. And as always, when in doubt, it is best to talk to your provider or one of our nurses to make sure you have the correct medicine based on the presenting symptoms.