

Advice from your Family Doctor

TRY THIS AND CALL ME IN THE MORNING

We have recommended a "Grandma's remedy" to help you get through your infection. Although a clear scientific backing is not available, these points are considered very useful. The following is a guide to some of these "remedies". They may help restore you to a more normal state while you fight the "bug".

Vitamin C - The only controversy seems to be the dosage rather than whether or not vitamin C is useful in increasing your body's resistance to an infection. I recommend 1000 mg 2 or 3 times a day. Some suggest higher doses. The least expensive is the crystalline form where 1 teaspoon full is approximately 3000 mg.

Gargling - Warm salt water gargling is as helpful as many, and better than most, remedies for a sore, irritable, or scratchy throat. Place a full teaspoon of table salt in a glass of very warm water and stir until dissolved. For the best results, gargle 6 to 8 times at least 2 to 3 times a day. Rinse your mouth out, afterwards, with plain water to remove the salty taste.

Fluids - Drinking lots of fluids is a common recommendation from everyone including grandma. She will usually add to this chicken soup. Whatever else chicken soup represents, it is soothing and replaces body fluids lost by a high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or excessive perspiration. Other clear fluids such as mineral water, or *Pedialyte* (for children) are also helpful.

Bed Rest - Rest and sleep put the body at ease so that a greater share of your metabolic energy can be used to enhance your body's own defense mechanisms to fight the infection.

Nose Care - Use a mixture of Normal Saline (*Salinex, Otrivin Saline, Ocean, etc.*) and one of the low dosage over-the-counter nasal decongestants (*Otrivin, Afrin, etc.*) The recipe is: 0.5 ml. of the .05% decongestant into the 30 ml. bottle of saline solution. Use this mixture by lying on your back (on your bed e.g.) with your head over the edge so that it is upside down. Squirt rather than drop the solution into each nostril. If you taste the nose drops you are using them incorrectly. Also, a dab of *Vicks* to each nostril will help prevent drying and nosebleeds.

As a generality, over-the-counter cold remedies are less useful than the above and certainly a lot more expensive. If I have prescribed an antibiotic, it is because I believe that you have clinical evidence that one of the many types of bacteria are present and play a role in your illness. Antibiotics are absolutely not effective against viruses and it is these infectious agents which are the cause of "colds", the Flu, or what we usually call "Upper Respiratory Infections" (or URI's). Antibiotics are most effective when taken at regular intervals which is 1 to 4 times per day depending upon the particular agent chosen. The duration of therapy may vary from 3 days (for most urinary tract infections) to 10 days (for proven strep B throat infections).

**Charles H. Pierce, M.D., Ph.D.
Family Physician 1973 – 1997**