



Ask Your Pharmacist

Keeping Your Medicine Cabinet Prepared This Cold & Flu Season

(NAPSA)—To avoid a cold or the flu this year, you will not need to isolate your family behind locked doors. Simple measures can help prevent a cold or flu and minimize the severity of any symptoms. With nearly 62 million cases of the common cold and 95 million cases of influenza reported each year, it is important that families take steps to be prepared for the duration of the season.

“The best way to stay healthy this time of year is to take proactive steps to manage your family’s health,” said Ron Sroka, pharmacist and vice president of pharmacy initiatives for Medicine Shoppe International, Inc. “Take the time to research, stock up on proper medications and consider vitamins and minerals to help prepare immune systems to fight off colds and the flu.”

Vitamins and minerals that aid in boosting immune systems and minimize the symptoms of colds and the flu include:

- Vitamin C—antioxidant that improves white blood cell count

- Zinc—mineral essential for energy metabolism and proper growth that can shorten the duration of colds

- Selenium—mineral that helps increase the effectiveness of other antioxidants.

If you do develop a cold or the flu, smart shopping is essential to selecting the right medication and saving money. To aid in medication choices, below is a guide to medications commonly used to minimize cold and flu symptoms. Private label options for these drugs can offer significant cost savings.

Consult your pharmacist or physician before taking any over-the-counter medications if you are taking prescription medications, as some over-the-counter drugs can interact with prescription medications and worsen your condition. A comprehensive drug information database with detailed information on thousands of drugs can be found at www.medicineshoppe.com. Additional health information and a pharmacy locator are also on the site.

Symptoms	Recommended Medication	How it Works	Examples	Possible Side Effects
Aching, pain, fever	Analgesic	Reduces fever, relieves pain	Ibuprofen, aspirin, Tylenol®	Dizziness, weakness, nausea
Runny nose, sneezing, itchy/watery eyes	Antihistamine	Blocks histamines, the chemical responsible for sneezing, nasal drainage and itching	Benadryl®, Claritin®	Drowsiness, dry mouth
Nasal congestion	Decongestant	Constricts blood vessels to reduce blood supply to nasal mucus membranes, opening nasal passages	Sudafed®, pseudoephedrine, Nasonex®	High blood pressure, insomnia, nervousness, irritability, headache
Dry, irritated cough	Antitussive/expectorant	Loosens phlegm and increases lubrication of the lungs for a more productive cough	Guaifenesin, Delsym®, Robitussin®	Drowsiness, dizziness, constipation, upset stomach, restlessness
Sore throat	Medicated lozenges and gargles	Soothes soreness as short-term topical anesthetic	Sucrets®, Halls®, Cepacol®, Chloraseptic®	Dizziness, weakness, nausea, choking hazard