



Ask The Pharmacist

Tips For Surviving Cold And Flu Season

(NAPSA)—With cold and flu season upon us, Americans can choose from a wide variety of the over-the-counter medications to treat their cold and flu symptoms. With many products treating multiple symptoms from runny nose to fever, it's important to choose the one that is right for you.

Papatya Tankut, R.Ph., Vice President of Pharmacy Professional Services at CVS/pharmacy, answers questions about cold and flu, how to best manage your symptoms and what to look for in over-the-counter cold and flu medicine.

How can I choose the right medication for my symptoms?

Always check the “active ingredients” section on the back of the product to determine the right medicine for your symptoms. If you have multiple symptoms, look for active ingredients that are specific to your symptoms in any combined formulas. Stay away from ingredients that you don't need. Consult your physician or pharmacist to make an informed decision on the best medication for you.

Are there any medications I should avoid?

If you are taking prescription medications, check with your pharmacist or physician to determine if there are any over-the-counter medications that should be avoided. Some over-the-counter medications can weaken or strengthen a prescription drug's effectiveness or can cause dangerous interactions.

Patients with high blood pressure should avoid cold and flu products containing nasal decongestants or active ingredients like pseudoephedrine. Anyone with thyroid disorders, asthma or diabetes should discuss with their pharmacist or physician which over-the-counter products



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are safe based on their current medications.

How can I fight cold and flu?

A flu vaccination is a first line of defense against the flu. The Centers for Disease Control recommends a yearly flu vaccination, especially for people ages 50 and older, those with chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma and heart disease, women who are pregnant and health care providers.

Additionally, the first step to fight cold and flu is to avoid the spread of germs. Practice frequent hand washing, avoid contact with people affected with cold and flu and use a germ-killing disinfectant to clean surfaces like your desk.

Where can I get a flu shot and more information?

Check with your physician to see if they are offering flu shots. If not, CVS/pharmacy will offer flu vaccinations in more than 4,000 of its locations across the country. Consumers can call (800) SHOP-CVS for locations or visit CVS.com for store locations and additional information regarding cold and flu.