

# **Health Alert**

## **Cold Medicine Ingredients Can Raise Your Blood Pressure**

(NAPS)—There's a reason it's called the "common" cold: Adults have an average two to three colds per year and children even more, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### **The Problem**

Most people recover from a cold within a week to 10 days. But decongestants may raise blood pressure or interfere with the effectiveness of some prescribed blood pressure medications, according to the American Heart Association.

### **Read The Label**

Be sure to read labels on over-the-counter (OTC) medications, especially if you have high blood pressure (HBP). Some contain decongestants such as oxymetazoline, phenylephrine and pseudoephedrine.

You should also look for warnings related to high blood pressure or HBP medication and talk to your health care professional before taking OTC medications or supplements. And don't stop taking prescribed medications without talking to your doctor.

Some OTCs are also high in sodium, which can raise blood pressure. So look at the active and inactive ingredients lists for the words "sodium" or "soda." If you have high blood pressure, you should consume less than 1,500 mg of sodium a day from all sources—and one dose of some OTCs can contain more than a whole day's allowance.

### **Be Careful With Supplements Or Natural (Naturopathic) Remedies**

Special pills, vitamins or drinks don't substitute for prescription medications and lifestyle modifications. Talk to your health care provider before taking any OTC drug or supplement that claims to lower your blood pressure. They may



**Treating the common cold can have uncommonly dangerous effects on people with high blood pressure. But some simple precautions can prevent problems.**

not work as advertised and may interfere with other medications. Some, like natural licorice and diet pills, can even raise your blood pressure.

### **What Else To Watch For**

Other drugs and substances that can raise your blood pressure include:

- Alcohol
- Amphetamines
- Antidepressants
- Atypical Antipsychotics (such as clozapine and olanzapine)
- Caffeine
- Oral Contraceptives
- Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs: ibuprofen and naproxen sodium, for example)
- Illicit Drugs
- Systemic Corticosteroids (for example, prednisone and methylprednisolone)

### **Learn More**

For more information about keeping your heart healthy, go to [www.heart.org/hbp](http://www.heart.org/hbp). The maker of Coricidin HBP, Bayer Healthcare LLC, is a proud sponsor of the American Heart Association's High Blood Pressure Effort.