

# Combating the Common Cold

By Rachel Maier, MS



**EVERY WINTER**, my family comes down with a good old fashioned cold, and when it happens, I do what mothers have done for generations: I make a big pot of ginger-infused chicken noodle soup, swirl cups of chamomile tea with honey and lemon, and remind everyone to slow down and rest.

I also inevitably run to the local pharmacy for tissues, cough medicine and pain relievers because, somehow, we always run out. When I go, I am always bombarded by shelves full of colorful medicine bottles claiming to have cracked the code for “fast action” and “instant relief” that “shortens colds!” (or whatever happens to be the catchy promise du jour). Even supplements such as vitamin C and zinc get in on the hype and flaunt their cold-busting properties. But I have to remind myself: While both over-the-counter medicines and supplements may provide relief from the symptoms associated with a cold, they don’t provide a cure, and like it or not, colds last for seven to 10 days. The best any of us can do to combat them is provide comfort and immune support while colds run their course.

## A New Spin on the Same Ingredients

How to best do that is a point of contention: Are supplements best, or is cold medicine key? What about homeopathic, natural remedies? There are pros and cons for each, and it seems to come down to how you prefer to deal with being sick.

For those who prefer taking medicine, it may be helpful to remember that while there are a lot of options to choose from, the products all contain some combination of the same ingredients:

*Analgesics:* Acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen sodium) provide pain relief.

*Decongestants:* Pseudoephedrine and phenylephrine provide short-term relief of nasal congestion.

*Expectorants:* Guaifenesin relieves chest congestion.

*Antihistamines:* Chlorpheniramine maleate, diphenhydramine and doxylamine succinate help relieve runny nose, sneezing and watery eyes.

*Cough suppressants:* Dextromethorphan helps control coughing by blocking the coughing reflex.


At the end of the day, which “new and improved” formula you choose is less important than only taking what you really need. (In other words, if you have a sore throat and nasal congestion without a cough, stick to analgesics and pseudoephedrine and avoid multi-symptom medicines.)

Supplements such as echinacea, vitamin C and zinc contain properties that support the immune system that some swear help kick their colds to the curb. These supplements have been used

for generations, too. However, studies are inconclusive as to how much they actually help. If you want to try them, use them in moderation and according to package directions.

## Tried-and-True Symptom Relievers

There’s a reason people have relied on home remedies for generations, and it’s a good one: They help ease the symptoms and make colds a little more bearable. Honey soothes sore throats; tea and soup keep bodies hydrated; lemon contains vitamin C, which boosts the immune system; ginger eases congestion; chamomile brings comfort to ailing bodies naturally; and saline rinses remove mucus from nasal passages. Plus, many of these common items have anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties, and they don’t contain chemicals or additives the body doesn’t need. When my family is sick, we turn to these most often.

Oh, I still like a good cough drop and over-the-counter medicines that actually work. Western medicine harnessed the power of harder-to-find compounds that alleviate symptoms of the common cold, and I’m grateful for them! But again, they help relieve, not remove, the symptoms. Combating the common cold comes down to hydration, immune system support and rest. Here are six products that help you do just that. 



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### Vaporeze Menthol + Eucalyptus Vapor Pads for Humidifiers

The jury's still out on whether humidifiers really help relieve symptoms of the common cold, but my kids sure say they do! Humidifiers put moisture back in the air, which helps them breathe a little easier when their noses are super stuffy and sore. Try menthol and eucalyptus-infused vapor pads with your favorite cool mist humidifier.

[\\$19.99; www.amazon.com/stores/Vaporeze/page/CB4F5171-784E-452E-8C0A-7BFC82D0F618](https://www.amazon.com/stores/Vaporeze/page/CB4F5171-784E-452E-8C0A-7BFC82D0F618)

### Baraka Ceramic Neti Pot

The Neti pot is an ancient method of clearing the sinuses. But why settle for using a plastic pot when you can get a beautiful, high-fired ceramic piece that was handcrafted in the United States? The Baraka ceramic neti pot is a durable yet lightweight piece of stoneware finished with food-grade ceramic glaze. It is 100 percent lead-free, safe and nontoxic and, best of all, easy to use.

[\\$28.00; store.simussupport.com/baraka-ceramic-neti-pot](https://store.simussupport.com/baraka-ceramic-neti-pot)



## Shopping Guide for Combatting the Common Cold



### Genexa Cough and Chest Congestion

When the urge to cough just won't quit, cough syrup can be a miracle of modern medicine — especially when you're trying to sleep! But most mainstream cough syrups are made with artificial colors and sweeteners and are loaded with chemicals. If you want reliable cough relief without all the extras, try Genexa's maximum strength cough suppressant and expectorant. It helps temporarily control the urge to cough, relieves chest congestion and thins and loosens mucus. Also try Genexa Kids' Cough and Chest Congestion.

[\\$17.99; www.amazon.com/dp/B0BJHDZ149](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0BJHDZ149)

### Maty's Vapor Rub

Made with eucalyptus, peppermint and tea tree essential oils, Maty's All Natural Vapor Rub is a great alternative to the petroleum-based national brand we grew up slathering on our chests. Maty's naturally provides soothing relief from congestion without synthetic camphor, petroleum, parabens, hydrogenated oils, artificial fragrances or gluten and is suitable for ages 2 and up.

[\\$14.99; matyshealthyproducts.com/products/vapor-rub](https://matyshealthyproducts.com/products/vapor-rub)



### Proper Good Chicken Noodle Soup

Chicken noodle soup with a swirl of immune-boosting ginger and turmeric without the mess of making it myself? Yes please. This shelf-stable soup is reminiscent of the homemade soup you love, but it's ready in 90 seconds.

[Starts at \\$5.19; eatpropergood.com/products/chicken-noodle-soup](https://eatpropergood.com/products/chicken-noodle-soup)

### Traditional Medicinals Get Well Soon Care Package

Be ready to take good care of yourself and your loved ones with a stash of Traditional Medicinals' most-loved teas and lozenges. This bundle includes the customer favorite Throat Coat, along with Immune Zoom, Echinacea Plus and Cold Care P.M. teas plus two packs of Throat Coat lozenges. [\\$47.95; www.traditionalmedicinals.com/products/get-well-soon-care-package](https://www.traditionalmedicinals.com/products/get-well-soon-care-package)

