

# The Mortar & Pestle

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Stafford Pharmacy and Home Healthcare



## THE CAUTIONS OF COUGH AND COLD MEDICINES

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The cough and cold aisle can be the most daunting aisle in a pharmacy. There are many options and most products contain multiple medical ingredients. Although cough and cold medicines can be purchased without a prescription, they are not safe for everyone. Certain medical conditions could put you at risk of adverse effects from certain cough and cold medications such as Buckley's® or Tylenol® Cough and Cold. These are known as drug-disease interactions.

### Here are some examples of drug-disease interactions to avoid:

1. Men with BPH (benign prostatic hypertrophy) or an enlarged prostate should avoid medications that contain antihistamines such as Benadryl® because they may increase difficulty urinating.
2. People with asthma, emphysema or bronchitis should avoid cough suppressants such as DM (dextromethorphan) because it prevents removal of troublesome phlegm. This may worsen breathing and it can also mask worsening of symptoms.
3. Patients with glaucoma should avoid antihistamines because they can increase pressure in the eyes and worsen glaucoma.
4. Patients with heart disease should avoid anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen because they can increase blood pressure.
5. Diabetics should avoid decongestants like pseudoephedrine because they can cause the body to break down stored sugars and increase blood sugar. This can result in uncontrolled blood sugar levels and may require an increased insulin dose.

There are many more drug-disease interactions like these that can result in harm to certain patients. Additionally, there are often multiple ingredients in cough and cold products, each with its own side effects and drug interactions. When possible, select a product with a single medical ingredient to help prevent unwanted effects.

If you have one of the following conditions, it is important to ask a pharmacist for advice when selecting over-the-counter medications: ***asthma, COPD, diabetes, epilepsy, uncontrolled thyroid disease, glaucoma, heart disease, depression, insomnia, BPH, suspected bacterial infections, pregnancy or breastfeeding, older age, smoking, and liver disease.***

The common cold is caused by a **viral infection**; therefore, there is no treatment that will cure it and antibiotics are useless. Medication may be used to help relieve symptoms, but it **does not resolve the infection or make you better sooner**. When you take medicine for a cold, make sure you weigh the pros and cons of taking something based on your other medications and medical conditions.

**At Stafford Pharmacy, our pharmacists are always available to help you select a safe and appropriate option for your cough and cold symptoms.**

## CHILDREN'S COUGH AND COLD CONUNDRUM

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On average, children get 7 to 10 colds per year or more if they attend day care. Each cold can last one to two weeks; this means that children can be sick for **1/3 of every year, and this is considered normal!** However, the use of medicine to suppress a cough or treat cold symptoms in this age group is not recommended. **Cough suppressants can prevent children from removing phlegm, possibly making them worse instead of better.** Although it may not be enjoyable, the purpose of a cough is to remove bad mucus from their lungs. Often, the best treatments for a cold for children are grandma's home remedies—chicken noodle soup and extra sleep.

When your child has a fever, it is often a sign that he or she is fighting an infection. Treatment of a fever is often not necessary because it helps your child fight the infection, but treatment may help your child feel better. The temperature that defines a fever is different depending on where it is measured.

### Thermometer Placement

Rectum  
Oral  
Armpit  
Ear/Forehead

### Fever Point

+38.1°C  
+37.6°C  
+37.4°C  
+38.1°C

Tylenol® (acetaminophen) and Advil® (ibuprofen) are both safe to use for pain and fever in most children. These medications should be dosed based on your child's weight. **Aspirin® (acetylsalicylic acid) cannot be used in children under the age of 18 because of the risk of Reye's syndrome (sudden brain and liver damage).** \*\*\* *Speak to a pharmacist to help choose the right product for your child?* \*\*\*

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT: NETI POT

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Before trying pharmaceuticals for your stuffy nose, this drug-free tool may help relieve your symptoms. A Neti Pot® (shown to the right) is used to loosen and rinse out mucus that clogs your sinuses. It works for both cold and allergy symptoms as well as to prevent symptoms. The Neti Pot uses salt water known as normal saline to help prevent infection and burning sensations. There are many different companies that make these devices. They all work the same way, although they may look slightly different.



### How to use it:

1. Fill the pot using a supplied packet of salt and the directed amount of lukewarm water
2. Blow your nose
3. Leaning over a sink, tilt your head to one side and pour one half of the contents of the Neti Pot® through one nostril, keeping the spout of the pot sealed to your nose. The liquid should run through your sinuses and out the other nostril. If it runs into your mouth, you are doing it incorrectly
4. Repeat step 3 on the other nostril until the pot is empty

If this is uncomfortable for you or your child, there are also medicine-free sprays available that are used for the same function. **Ask one of our pharmacists for more information!**

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