

they are easily contaminated with bacteria and viruses. Pseudoephedrine may be prescribed by mouth as a decongestant every 6 hours in children older than 4 years old.

Nursing Alert

To avoid rebound nasal congestion, vasoconstrictive nose drops or sprays should not be administered for more than 3 days.

Topical vapor rubs could be considered for children older than 2 years old to ease nasal congestion. A study by [Paul, Beiler, King, and colleagues \(2010\)](#) found that vapor rub containing camphor, menthol, and eucalyptus oils relieved coughing, congestion, and assisted with sleep. These vapor rubs should never be given orally or placed beneath the nose.

The hospitalized child may be apprehensive; the treatments and tests are frightening and stress producing. It is important to involve the entire family in the care as appropriate and to encourage questions and facilitate effective communication. Reducing anxiety and apprehension reduces psychological distress in the child, and when the child is more relaxed, the respiratory efforts are reduced. Easing respiratory efforts makes the child less apprehensive, and encouraging the presence of the caregiver provides the child with a source of comfort and support.

Prevent Spread of Infection

Careful hand washing is important when caring for children with respiratory tract infections. Children and families should use a tissue or their arm to cover their noses and mouths when they cough or sneeze, dispose of the tissues properly, and wash their hands. Used tissues should be immediately thrown into the wastebasket and not allowed to accumulate in a pile. Children with respiratory tract infections should not share drinking cups, eating utensils, washcloths, or towels. To decrease contamination, wash hands frequently and do not touch eyes or noses with hands.

Parents should try to remove affected children from contact with other children when possible. An effort should be made to teach well children to stay away from ill children, to wash their hands frequently, and to avoid eating and drinking from the same utensils