

Treating a Child's Congestion or Stuffy Nose

CALL 102 IF YOUR CHILD:

- Has difficulty breathing or is unable to breathe
- Suddenly starts coughing or choking after being fed
- Has a cough associated with any skin color change such as turning blue
- Seems out of breath
- Is unable to talk or eat

Colds, flu, and allergies cause congestion in babies and toddlers. Colds and flu are most commonly caused by viruses, so antibiotics won't help. Supportive treatments can help with symptoms, however there is no cure and the body needs to fight off the virus.

Call Doctor If:

- Symptoms last longer than two weeks
- Your child is congested and is three months or younger.
- Your child has a severe cough or a cough that sounds like a bark.
- Your child is breathing fast and has a fever with a cough.
- Your child has ear pain.

1. Clear Out Mucus

- Use an infant nasal bulb, or aspirator, to suck mucus from your baby's nose. It's OK to use nasal saline to loosen the mucus.
- If your child is able, have her blow her nose regularly.
- Never use a cold or cough medicine in kids under age 4 unless a pediatrician suggests it.

2. Give Fluids

- If your child is over 3 months, offer him what he usually drinks, such as formula or breastmilk. Water is good, too.
- Older children can have warm soups and other drinks.

3. Add Moisture

- Use a cool-mist humidifier if the air is dry.

- Use saline nose drops to moisten the nasal passages.
- Sit in the bathroom with the hot shower running and have your child breathe in the steam.

4. Treat Other Symptoms

- If your child is older than a year, try 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of honey for cough.
- Avoid irritants, such as cigarette smoke.
- Rub petroleum jelly under the nose to prevent chapping.
- If your child has allergies, talk to your pediatrician about treatment.