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Symptomatic Treatments for Viral Upper and Lower Respiratory Infections

Fever/Aches/Pains

- Schedule ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve) over the counter around the clock for the first 2 days then as needed
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) over the counter can be used at the same time as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)

Mucus Production

- Over-the-counter guaifenesin (Mucinex) can be used to help thin secretions and is particularly helpful in the morning

Cough

- Over-the-counter dextromethorphan (Delsym) can help control coughing and is particularly helpful at night when coughing can interrupt sleep.
- A spoonful of honey has also been shown to be similarly effective if taken every few hours. Hot teas and other liquids may also soothe the throat and alleviate coughing as can mentholated cough drops.
- Coughing can persist for up to 6-8 weeks after a cold resolves, but should get better gradually over time

Congestion

- Pseudoephedrine (Pseudofed) which is sold without a prescription, but behind the pharmacy counter, can help with congestion. It should not be taken if you have uncontrolled hypertension and should not be taken for more than 3 days straight.
- Oxymetazoline (Afrin) can be taken instead of pseudoephedrine (Pseudofed) but again should not be taken for more than 3 days straight.
- Humidity and nasal saline rinses can also help and can both be used in conjunction with the medications above.