

Kids' Medical Care—Without the Medicine

By Woodland Publishing, Inc.

Keeping kids healthy is always a parent's main concern. But, following a voluntary recall of infant cold medications and the recent FDA recommendation that such medications not be used in children under age six, many concerned parents do not know how to care for their sick children. Popular cold medicines; however, never offered more than symptom relief—and in children maybe not even that, according to the FDA.

Some physicians suggest that parents should look to nature for cold and flu treatments. "We need to reconsider natural alternatives that work as well as and, in many cases, better than over-the-counter remedies," says integrative-medicine advocate Ben Kligler, MD.

According to experts, some of the best things you can offer a sick child are fluids, rest and a humidifier. And chicken soup! The traditional home remedy really works, says Mary L. Hardy, MD; the steamy broth prevents dehydration and fights congestion. And two common soup ingredients—garlic and onions—are known to have antiviral properties.

If sick children need more than soup and sleep, there are other natural remedies that can relieve symptoms and support the body's ability to heal itself. According to Dr. Hardy, a teaspoon of honey with lemon can provide relief for an irritated throat. For another delicious remedy, try brewing cinnamon tea. According to herbalist James A. Duke, PhD, cinnamon contains a chemical that may have anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and fever-reducing properties.

Another practitioner, Robert Rountree, MD, recommends astragalus and Western larch for children. Astragalus is a traditional Chinese herb that may support immune cell function. Western larch is a pine extract that may be especially beneficial for children who suffer from ear infections. The extract contains arabinogalactan, a natural, immune-supporting sugar that is also found in astragalus and echinacea.

If your child has a fever that lasts for more than four days, experiences ear pain or trouble breathing, or has a persistent cough, take him or her to see a physician. Otherwise, let your child heal the way nature intended.