

FDA Recommends Ban On Children's Decongestants— What Now?

(NAPSA)—It's 3 a.m. and your child is still awake because of his congestion. What do you do?

Until recently, most parents would have reached for a decongestant or antihistamine to help everyone back to sleep. But now the FDA has questions about the effectiveness and safety of these medications and there's concern that parents are overusing them.

Many companies have already issued recalls for their children's products, leaving little on the shelves that can help solve a stuffy nose. So what's a parent to do?

"There are some alternative options for treating congestion during the oncoming cold season," says Dr. Diane Heatley, a pediatric ENT at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She suggests other methods for clearing the nasal passages and relieving the uncomfortable symptoms. These methods are safe for kids of all ages, including young children, and give parents some much-needed options in this time of medical confusion.

• **A nose pump spray.** This treatment can be used for all children and is especially effective for babies. A fine saline solution mist is pumped into the nasal cavity, thinning mucus and easing congestion to improve breathing. Using a pump spray is important to avoid contaminating the saline solution with nasal discharge and also prevents irritating the nose, since it's placed just outside the nose.

• **Nasal washing.** When the child is a little older, Dr. Heatley advises using a nasal washing system, such as SinuCleanse.

Children as young as age 4 can use this ancient technique of pouring saline solution from a neti pot into one nostril to drain out the other. This treatment is gentle, safe and effective since it gives a full washing of the nasal passageway and is easily done

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*—Dr. Diane Heatley, ENT at
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using the SinuCleanse premeasured saline packets. A nasal squeeze bottle is another excellent option, as long as the squeeze pressure is gentle and the bottle is kept clean.

"Children get an average of six to eight upper respiratory infections per year, perhaps twice that many for those who attend day care or preschool," says Heatley, "and parents need something that can help ease the symptoms. Nasal washing is a wonderful symptom reliever."

And, she adds, "Since nasal saline contains no medication, it can be used as often as necessary, even every hour, to help keep secretions thin."

For more information on nasal washing or the SinuCleanse system, visit www.sinucleanse.com.