



## Health and Life Style.

### Cold remedies: What works, what doesn't, what can't hurt.

There's no cure for the common cold. But what about cold remedies that claim to make you feel better faster? Find out what's effective — and what's not.



Cold remedies are almost as common as the common cold itself, but are they effective? Nothing can cure a cold, but there are some remedies that might help ease your symptoms and keep you from feeling so miserable. Here's a look at some common cold remedies and what's known about them.

#### ***Cold remedies: What works.***

If you catch a cold, you can expect to be sick for one to two weeks. That doesn't mean you have to be miserable. Besides getting enough rest, these remedies might help you feel better:

- **Stay hydrated.** Water, juice, clear broth or warm lemon water with honey helps loosen congestion and prevents dehydration. Avoid alcohol, coffee and caffeinated sodas, which can make dehydration worse.
- **Rest.** Your body needs to heal.
- **Soothe a sore throat.** A saltwater gargle — 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon salt dissolved in a 240 ml glass of warm water can temporarily relieve a sore or scratchy throat. Children younger than 6 years are unlikely to be able to gargle properly. You can also try ice chips, sore throat sprays, lozenges or hard candy. Don't give lozenges or hard candy to children younger than 3 to 4 years old because they can choke on them.
- **Combat stuffiness.** Over-the-counter saline nasal drops and sprays can help relieve stuffiness and congestion. In infants, experts recommend putting several saline drops into one nostril, then gently suctioning that nostril with a bulb syringe. To do this, squeeze the bulb, gently place the syringe tip in the nostril about 1/4 to 1/2 inch (about 6 to 12 millimetres) and slowly release the bulb. Saline nasal sprays may be used in older children.



- **Relieve pain.** For children 6 months or younger, give only acetaminophen (Panadol). For children older than 6 months, give either acetaminophen or ibuprofen (Nurofen). Ask your child's doctor for the correct dose for your child's age and weight. Adults can take acetaminophen, ibuprofen or aspirin. Use caution when giving aspirin to children or teenagers. Though aspirin is approved for use in children older than age 3, children and teenagers recovering from chickenpox or flu-like symptoms should never take aspirin as it has been linked to Reye's syndrome, a rare but potentially life-threatening condition, in such children.
- **Sip warm liquids.** A cold remedy used in many cultures, taking in warm liquids, such as chicken soup, tea, or warm apple juice, might be soothing and might ease congestion by increasing mucus flow.
- **Add moisture to the air.** A cool mist vaporizer or humidifier can add moisture to your home, which might help loosen congestion. Change the water daily, and clean the unit according to the manufacturer's instructions. Don't use steam, which hasn't been shown to help and may cause burns.
- **Try over-the-counter (OTC) cold and cough medications.** For adults and children older than 5, OTC decongestants, antihistamines and pain relievers might offer some symptom relief. However, they won't prevent a cold or shorten its duration, and most have some side effects. Experts agree that these shouldn't be given to younger children. Overuse and misuse of these medications can cause serious damage. Take medications only as directed. Some cold remedies contain multiple ingredients, such as a decongestant plus a pain reliever, so read the labels of cold medications you take to make sure you're not taking too much of any medication.



## ***Cold remedies: What doesn't work.***

The list of ineffective cold remedies is long. A few of the more common ones that don't work include:

- **Antibiotics.** These attack bacteria, but they're no help against cold viruses. Avoid asking your doctor for antibiotics for a cold or using old antibiotics you have on hand. You won't get well any faster and inappropriate use of antibiotics contributes to the serious and growing problem of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
- **Over-the-counter cold and cough medications in young children.** OTC cold and cough medications may cause serious and even life-threatening side effects in children. The US FDA warns against their use in children younger than age 6.
- **Zinc.** The cold-fighting reputation of zinc has had its ups and downs. That's because many zinc studies are flawed. The jury is still out, but a review of 18 randomized, controlled studies indicated that zinc lozenges or syrup reduced the average length of a cold in otherwise healthy people when taken within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms.



The review also found some evidence that zinc taken for five months to prevent colds reduced the incidence of colds in children. Keep in mind, though, that you can't really know what's in the zinc product you take. The review didn't recommend zinc for people with chronic illnesses, such as asthma, because they weren't included in the studies. Side effects of zinc include a bad taste and nausea. Intranasal zinc may result in permanent damage to the sense of smell. The US FDA issued a warning against using three zinc-containing nasal cold remedies because they had been associated with a long-lasting or permanent loss of smell (anosmia).

### ***Cold remedies: What probably doesn't hurt.***

In spite of ongoing studies, the scientific jury is still out on some popular cold remedies, such as vitamin C and echinacea. Here's an update on some common alternative remedies:



- **Vitamin C.** It appears that for the most part taking vitamin C won't help the average person prevent colds. However, taking vitamin C before the onset of cold symptoms may shorten the duration of symptoms. Vitamin C may provide benefit for people at high risk of colds due to frequent exposure, for example, children who attend group child care during the winter.
- **Echinacea.** Study results on whether echinacea prevents or shortens colds are mixed. Some studies show no benefit. Others show some reduction in the severity and duration of cold symptoms when taken in the early stages of a cold. Different types of echinacea used in different studies may have contributed to the differing results. Echinacea seems to be most effective if you take it when you notice cold symptoms and continue it for seven to 10 days. It appears to be safe for healthy adults, but it can interact with many drugs. Check with your doctor before taking echinacea or any other supplement.

### ***Take care of yourself.***

Although usually minor, colds can make you feel miserable. It's tempting to try the latest remedy, but the best thing you can do is take care of yourself. Rest, drink fluids and keep the air around you moist. Remember to wash your hands frequently.

A young man excitedly tells his mother he's fallen in love and that he is going to get married. He says, "Just for fun, Ma, I'm going to bring over 3 girls and you try and guess which one I'm going to marry." The mother agrees. The next day, he brings three women into the house and sits them down on the couch and they chat for a while. He then says, "Okay Ma, guess which one I'm going to marry." She immediately replies, "The one on the right." "That's amazing, Ma. You're right. How did you know?" The mother replies, "I don't like her."





## Chocolate

Valentine's Day has been and gone and with Easter just around the corner, a lot of chocolate has and will be given and eaten but do you know the health benefits gained when chocolate is eaten in moderation? The following video will tell you more about the chemistry and beneficial properties of this wonderful sweet treat – and then you won't feel so bad when you pig out.



Click [HERE](#).

You are confined only by the walls you've built around yourself..

## Does eating a healthy breakfast help control weight?

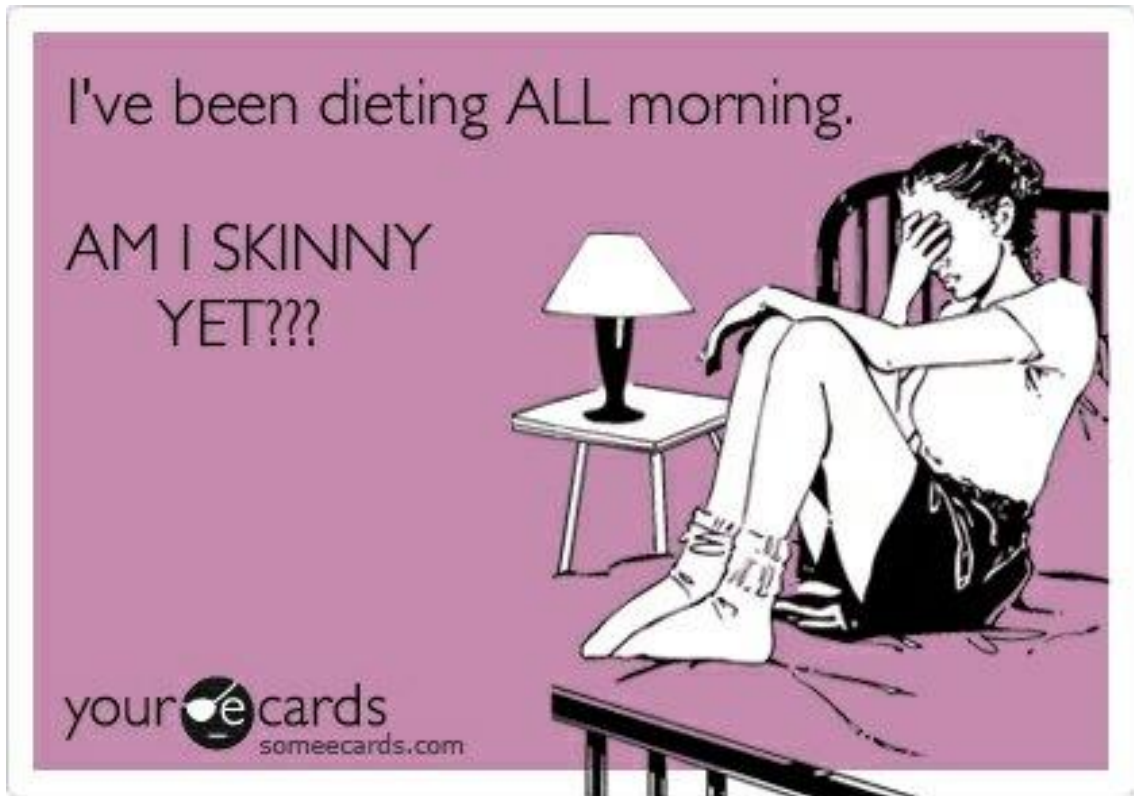
Research suggests that regularly eating a healthy breakfast may help you lose excess weight and maintain your weight loss in the following ways:

**Reduced hunger.** Eating breakfast may reduce your hunger later in the day, which may make it easier to avoid overeating. When you skip breakfast, you may feel ravenous later and be tempted to reach for a quick fix — such as vending machine candy or doughnuts. In addition, the prolonged fasting that occurs when you skip breakfast can increase your body's insulin response, which in turn increases fat storage and weight gain.

**Healthy choices.** Eating breakfast may get you on track to make healthy choices all day. People who eat breakfast tend to eat a healthier overall diet, one that is more nutritious and lower in fat. In contrast, people who skip breakfast are more likely to skip fruits and vegetables the rest of the day, too.

**More energy.** A healthy breakfast refuels your body and replenishes the glycogen stores that supply your muscles with immediate energy. Routinely skipping breakfast is associated with decreased physical activity.

So, if you skip breakfast — whether you're trying to save time or cut calories — you may want to reconsider, especially if you're trying to eat a healthy diet and manage your weight.



## Can I boost my metabolism to lose weight?



Trying to boost your metabolism probably won't lead to weight loss, at least not to the degree that changing your diet and lifestyle habits will. For example, caffeine has been shown to very slightly increase metabolism, but it doesn't appear to have a significant effect on long-term weight loss. Likewise, supplements claiming to boost your metabolism may have little or no benefit and may contain substances that can have serious health effects or may even be banned. How much you weigh really depends on the number of calories you eat and how much physical activity you get.

To lose weight, focus on the factors you have control over. These can help you manage your weight and may improve your metabolism.

**Calories.** To lose weight, reduce the number of calories in your diet. And keep in mind that as you age, you may need even fewer calories. This is because the amount of muscle tends to decrease as you get older, leading to an overall increase in fat. Fat tissue burns fewer calories than does muscle.





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**Activity.** Aerobic exercise helps you burn calories and strengthening exercises (resistance training) can help you build and maintain muscle mass. Having more muscle causes you to burn more calories even while at rest (your resting metabolic rate). Keep in mind that building more muscle to burn calories is much more difficult than burning calories through aerobic activities.

Only rarely is excessive weight gain caused by a medical problem that slows metabolism, such as [Cushing's syndrome](#) or an underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism). If you're concerned about your weight or you think your metabolism is too slow, talk with your doctor. Your doctor can check for medical causes and help you adopt healthy lifestyle changes to aid your weight loss.

## 5 tips for a better night's sleep.

Sleep is a critical part of managing stress and making healthy choices. Get a restful night's sleep with these tips. Sleep is a remarkably productive and critical part of life; it's the time when the brain and body recharge for another day. Yet, most of us simply aren't getting enough sleep. Stress, everyday demands and — yes, your smartphone — are likely culprits negatively impacting your sleep.

Either too little or too much sleep can make it tough to function at your best. Sleep better and wake up feeling more rested with this advice.



- Eat meals (especially dinner) at the same time each day and at least two to three hours before bedtime.
- Limit naps to 30 minutes at least six to eight hours before bedtime.
- Stay active. Any activity is good. For best results, get moving 20 to 30 minutes most days, at least four to six hours before bedtime.
- Limit your caffeine intake and avoid it after noon. Also avoid stimulants such as decongestants and nicotine.
- Go to bed at the same time every night and get up about the same time every morning — even on weekends.

A healthy amount of sleep for most adults is seven to eight hours a night. If self-care techniques don't help, talk to your health care provider. Sleep problems are treatable.

## Heart Disease.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Australia and a major cause of disability. Fortunately, there's a lot you can do to prevent it. Sometimes you may hear the term cardiovascular disease. This is actually a group of diseases that affect your heart and blood vessels, such as coronary artery disease.

Coronary artery disease occurs when the arteries to your heart become narrowed by cholesterol-containing fatty deposits. A heart attack results when one of these arteries becomes blocked, by a blood clot, for example, cutting off the supply of oxygen and nutrients to your heart. Stroke occurs when the blood supply to your brain is disrupted by a blockage or a rupture in the arteries.

Major risk factors for cardiovascular disease include:

- Smoking
- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- Family history
- Gender\*
- Increasing age
- High cholesterol levels
- Diabetes
- Physical inactivity of heart disease

*\*Note:* Although men have more heart attacks than premeno-pausal women do, women's risk of heart disease rises as they approach menopause and keeps rising as they age.

You can't turn back the clock or change your family tree. But you do have a role in managing your weight, diet, activity level, blood pressure, cholesterol levels and conditions such as diabetes.

To help manage these risk factors, make a commitment to a lifestyle that emphasizes heart-healthy eating.

The prestigious American Mayo Clinic has produced an excellent little booklet titled "*Your heart healthy eating guide*" which you can print out and read [HERE](#).

## Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) - Change 2016

The information should help many of you who reach the limit every year. It should clear up the changes that have been made to the PBS and to the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in particular the option to pay either the \$5.20 per script or the \$6.20 per script.





In 2015 the arrangement with Department of Health / PBS / RPBS was that a Concession Holder (includes DVA) would attain the PBS/RPBS Safety Net after having 60 prescriptions filled. Any prescriptions after the 60 would be provided free of charge to that person. This meant that an individual, family unit or couple who were Concession Card Holders and accrued 60 prescriptions in total would receive the 61st and subsequent prescriptions free in that calendar year. For DVA customers there will be no change to the annual (March) arrangement.

This is where the difference between \$260 (26 x \$10 pfn) and your costs above are reimbursed automatically. For me it has been \$260 or more since it first started 4 years ago.

As of 1st January 2016 the Department of Health / PBS / RPBS after consultation with stakeholders (such as Pharmacy Guild, AMA etc.) changed the Safety Net Threshold from 60 prescriptions per year to a value threshold of \$372.00 per year. At the same time it agreed with the Pharmaceutical guild that a further discount of \$1.00 per script would be allowed but would have to be paid by the pharmacy. Not all pharmacy's will pass this discount on to the consumer but pharmacy's like Priceline have said that they will at its own expense. When I queried why someone would do this I was told that it was done to maintain their customer base because if they didn't then a different pharmacy would.



What does this mean? OK, as a Concession Card Holder every DVA Card Holder who requires a prescription for a condition has to accrue \$372.00 in prescriptions before becoming eligible for the free prescriptions under the Safety Net. Under the new arrangement you can choose either to pay the \$5.20 or the \$6.20 per prescription. This may sound simple but it will depend on how many prescriptions you require per month (or your family need per month) as to what you should pay.

*Family A: Husband and Wife* – Husband has PTSD; Osteo Arthritis and Depression and every month requires 3 scripts per month. Wife has High Blood Pressure and Anxiety and requires 2 scripts per month so in total 5 scripts per month for both. In a 12-month period this couple will spend, if paying \$5.20 per script - \$26.00 per month or \$312.00 per annum and will not reach the Safety Net of \$372.00. If they choose to pay the \$6.20 per script they will spend \$31.00 per month and will reach the safety net of \$372.00 but will not achieve any benefit because the Safety will be reached in the 12th month (December) so unless they have any other scripts per year they would be better off paying the \$5.20 per script.

*Family B: Husband and Wife* – Husband has PTSD; Osteo Arthritis and Depression and every month requires 4 scripts per month. Wife has High Blood Pressure and Anxiety and requires 3 scripts per month so in total 7 scripts per month for both. In a 12-month period this couple will spend, if paying \$5.20 per script or \$36.40 per month and will reach the Safety Net of \$372.00 in November. This means that they will only have one month's free prescriptions saving \$36.40.

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If they choose to pay the \$6.20 per script they will spend \$43.40 per month and reach the safety net of \$372.00 in September meaning that they will have 3 months of free scripts saving \$130.40.

Each individual will need to calculate the best option for themselves based on the number of prescriptions that they get per month but the crucial thing to remember is that you must reach the \$372.00 limit before the Safety Net Threshold kicks in. If anyone is unsure of how to work it out, please do not hesitate to contact your Chemist.



If you can't afford a doctor,  
go to an airport - you'll get a  
free x-ray and a breast exam,  
and; if you mention Al Qaeda,  
you'll get a free colonoscopy.