

COUGH: IT'S-S-S-NOT THAT SIMPLE

Optimizing Management of Congestion and Cough in Cold, Flu, and Allergy Patients

A C M E R O U N D T A B L E A C T I V I T Y™



OTC Medications for Cough and Congestion

CATEGORY	MECHANISM	TYPES	BENEFIT	RISK
EXPECTORANT	Thins/loosens mucus in airways	Guaifenesin (IR and ER)	Clears thick mucus	Rare nausea
COUGH SUPPRESSANTS	Suppresses cough reflex center of medulla (CNS)	Dextromethorphan	Control of persistent cough	Do not take with MAO inhibitors
DECONGESTANTS	Constricts blood vessels of nasal membrane	Phenylephrine, pseudoephedrine, oxymetazoline	Relieves “stuffy, congested” nose	Stimulant effect (increase of HR, increase of BP)
MULTI-DRUG COMBINATIONS	Multiple mechanisms depending on ingredient	Often combines decongestant, cough suppressant, expectorant +/- acetaminophen	Optimal symptomatic management	“Drug overlap” caution strongly to patient
ANTIHISTAMINES	Blocks histamine	1 st gen.-diphenhydramine, chlorpheniramine 2 nd gen.-loratadine, cetirizine, fexofenadine	Relieves allergy symptoms of rhinorrhea, sneezing, itching and watery eyes	Sedation in 1st gen.; can be drying, use caution in those prone to urinary retention and those with glaucoma
NASAL STEROIDS	Reduce inflammation of nasal/sinus membranes	Budesonide, fluticasone, triamcinolone	Peak benefit after few days; relieves nasal/sinus congestion and decreases mucus production	Nosebleed, headache; caution in glaucoma
MAST CELL STABILIZER	Prevents activation/release of inflammatory mediators (mast cells, leukotrienes, histamine)	Cromolyn sodium nasal spray	More ideal for prevention of allergy symptoms since takes average of 1 week to work	Nosebleed, nasal burning, wheezing
NON-PHARM OPTIONS	Self explanatory	Nasal saline, neti pot, humidifier, lozenges, elevate head of the bed, hydration	Simple measures that loosen mucus. Lozenges that have menthol can decrease cough. All can be used in combination with other listed meds	Very safe (other than caution on hydration amount in CHF)