

# Nasal Congestion



## CAUSES

- Viral upper respiratory infections
- Allergy
- Small nasal passages
- Dry air
- Foreign object in the nose (bead, marble, end of makeup brush)

## TREATMENT

First, doing nothing is perfectly okay.

**Rule 1:** If the congestion is not bothering the child, do not treat it. If bothered, usually will be sleep or feeding problems, but the 'point is, don't treat the noise.

- Position: Head elevated, car seat, propped on pillows, recliner.
- Humidity: Hot steamy showers, cool mist humidifiers. Also drinking lots of liquids will help.
- No dairy products (thickens mucus, causes mucus production).
- Nose drops:
  - Saline (Ocean, Ayr). Really helps if dryness is the problem. Just squirt a few drops in each nostril and let the baby sneeze/sniffle.
  - Afrin (Oxymetazoline 0.05) OK to use in babies. Use a drop or two in each nostril every 12 hours as needed. No need to worry about "addiction" since you control the baby's use of this product.
  - Oral decongestants (Pseudo ephedrine). BEWARE!!!! These rarely help babies much beyond what the above products and treatments will do, and they often cause side effects of decreased appetite, crankiness and sleep disturbance.

**Rule 2:** if at all possible, the treatment should not be worse than the problem.

These products do nothing to keep a child from an ear infection or to help get over an ear infection or sinus infection.

- Expectorants (Guaifenesin) These are often helpful in keeping things moist and running and are often included with decongestants in combination products. Taste awful, but few side effects.
- Antihistamines (chlorpheniramine, brompheniramine, diphenhydramine). These are last for a reason: they make things worse most of the time. They can actually make it MORE likely that your child will develop infections of ears or sinuses. They dry up the mucus, and if there's going to be mucus, it should be wet so it will run out. A runny nose is not a problem that has to be treated. Use a Kleenex.

**Rule 3:** Just because it runs. it doesn't have to be stopped.

**Rule 4:** Just because its green doesn't mean an antibiotic is needed Things to be looking for: fever late in the illness (usually colds have fever at first), earaches (not just pulling at them), coughing to the point of vomiting, sore throats' with rashes, trouble breathing (not just noisy).

If you see these; we may need to see the child.