Cough and Cold: A Guide for Pharmacy Technicians

Presented by Thomas Flench, R.Ph., MBA
Cough and Cold: A Guide for Pharmacy Technicians

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**Speaker Disclosure:** Tom Flench has no actual or potential conflicts of interest in relation to this program

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Cough and Cold: A Guide for Pharmacy Technicians

Accreditation: Technicians-798-000-09-001-L01-T

CE Credits: 1.0 Continuing Education Hour or 0.1 CEU for technicians

Target Audience: Technicians

Expiration Date: 8/8/2011

Program Overview: We are well into the winter season when cough and cold symptoms are most problematic. Your customers will come to the pharmacy in search of the best advice and suggestions to their questions. The customer service that you provide about this topic will result in an increased awareness and trust in the pharmacy's ability to assist patient needs. This continuing education program will increase your understanding of how to work with your pharmacists to satisfy these needs.

Objectives:

- Describe cough/cold symptoms.
- Explain guidelines for pediatric medication use.
- Discuss FDA/CHPA statements concerning pediatric cough/cold medication use.
- Explain differences between adult and pediatric cough/cold therapy.
- Discuss OTC choices of cough and cold medicine.
- Discuss why your pharmacist is the person to consult with the caregiver about these drugs.

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Learning Objectives

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- Discuss why your pharmacist is the person to consult with the caregiver about these drugs
Not one of his better days !!!!!

Common Cold Symptoms

- Mild sore throat
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Very low grade fever
  - High fever is a FLU symptom
- Cough
- Lasts for 3 to 7 days
What Causes a Cold ??

- Viruses (50% are unidentified)\(^1\)
- Most common is the rhinovirus (40\%)\(^1\)
Cold-catching Factors

- Stress
- Fatigue
- Contact with other cold sufferers
  - Direct or Airborne
- Allergies
- Low humidity
What doesn’t cause a cold..... (although Mom disagrees)

- Exposure to cold weather
- Exposure to damp, wet conditions
- Becoming overheated
- If your pet has a cold
What *doesn’t* cure a cold…..

- Antibiotics
- Flu medications
- Most herbal remedies
- No absolute cure as of yet
Non-medical Cold Remedies....

- Lots of rest
- Fluids
- Humidifiers
Pediatric Considerations

- O-T-C cough and cold products are safe and effective when used as directed

- January 12, 2008
  - FDA issues Public Health Advisory
  - Children under 2 years of age
    - Medication dose errors
    - Accidental ingestion
    - Serious adverse reactions
Pediatric Considerations

- October 7, 2008
  - Consumer Healthcare Products Association
  - Represents many producers of OTC medications
- CHPA statement
  - Announced a voluntary modification of product labels by the manufacturers
  - “Do Not Use” if under 4 years of age
  - New child-proof packaging
  - New measuring devices used with these products
Why New Measuring Devices\(^4\) ?

- A recent article in “Contemporary Pediatrics” by Eden and Mir, states that a study was done to show the variance in measurement among household teaspoons.

- The study involved pediatricians(148), pharmacists(55), and caregivers(398).

- The volumes of teaspoons brought in from homes ranged from 4 milliliters up to 12.9 milliliters. (Only 1 teaspoon measured 5 mls.)

- This study suggests a serious potential for drug overdosing.
Not to Worry…Please

- As is usually the case, the vast majority of instances where children are being treated with cough and cold remedies shows safe and effective treatment.

- When recommended by physicians and pharmacists, medications are given correctly for C & C symptoms.
The FDA Speaks

- Has said that adverse side effects that are associated with the use of pediatric C & C preparations are **rare**.

- Problems arise when these OTC medications are:
  - administered incorrectly
  - are accidentally ingested
CHPA Guidelines and Tips

- Always follow dosing recommendations EXACTLY
- Use the measuring device that comes in package
- Never give 2 medicines at the same time that have the same active ingredient
- Only give the medication that treats the specific symptom
CHPA Guidelines and Tips

- At first sign of side effect, STOP THE MEDICATION
- Do NOT give adult medication to children
- Never use OTC meds to make children sleep
- Never give aspirin products to children
- Keep all medications out of reach of children
- Ask questions whenever in doubt
Pediatric OTC Cold Products

- Know your OTC sections and what your store carries on its shelves.

- Know what brands have generics and whether the price difference is substantial.

- Listen to recommendations that your pharmacists make, ask them what information about those products you as a technician should re-emphasize to the customer.
Pediatric OTC COLD Product: Tech Questions and Comments

- Remember to check the expiration date before ringing up the sale.

- “Would you like to ask the pharmacist anything about this medicine?”

- “After using, don’t forget to tighten the cap.”

- “Remember to keep the measuring spoon that came in the box.”

- “If you have any questions after you get home, just give us a call.”
Cough/Cold O-T-C Medications

- Cough Suppressants
- Expectorants
- Decongestants
- Antihistamines
O-T-C Cough Suppressants

- **Action** = cough relief/suppression

- **Short Acting vs. Long Acting**

- **Strengths** = (5-30mg/5ml.)
  - **Brand**= Delsym, Robitussin Dm, Triaminic LA   $$$$
  - **Generic**= dextromethorphan extra   $
O-T-C Expectorants

- Action = mucolytic (breaking up mucous)
- Brand = Robitussin $$$
- Generic = guaifenesin $$
- Also available as combination products
  - DM, CF, PE, and AC
O-T-C Decongestants

- Action = relieve runny, stuffy nose.
- Can make children “hyper” or irritable.
- Several different dose forms
  - Tabs, strips, liquid
- Brand names (contain phenylephrine, or PE)
  - Sudafed
  - Triaminic Chest
  - Tylenol Plus
O-T-C Antihistamines

- **Action**= runny nose, sneezing
- **Diphenhydramine, chlor/brom-pheniramine**
- **Side effects**
  - Sleepiness, dry mouth
- **Brand Name Products** (multiple symptoms)
  - Dimetapp
  - Vick’s 44
  - Tylenol Plus
  - PediaCare

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Adult Cold Medicine Treatment

- As adults, we have many cold medicines to choose from, due in part to the various dose forms available.

- Brands and generics will vary from retailer to retailer.

- Again, it is highly recommended that you become very familiar with your seasonal products and know their locations within your store.
Adult Cold Medicine Treatment

- Adults use the same types of medications as children, but in much stronger formulations.
- It is never recommended to use adult formulations for children.
- These medicines will only treat your symptoms, and should not be expected to cure your cold.
- Use is recommended for short term therapy.
Adult Cold Medicine Treatment

- Safety issues include:
  - High blood pressure
  - Diabetes
  - Pregnancy
- Always consult a healthcare provider when you have questions.
- Generics are as effective as brand name OTCs.
Adult Cold Medicine Treatment

- By treating only the symptom(s) you currently have, you can avoid certain side effects common from using the “all-in-one” combinations.

- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Cough
- Sneezing
- Runny nose
Sore throat treatment

- Pain relievers
- Lots of fluids for hydration
- Throat lozenges
- Throat sprays
- Mouthwash (salt water or commercial brands)
- If extremely painful, call your doctor.
  - Strep throat is a possibility
Nasal congestion / Sinus congestion

- Available in many dose forms
  - Tabs, caps, liquids, sprays, strips

- Drug = pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine
  - Sudafed, Drixoral, Comtrex, Afrin, Chlortrimeton D

- Side effects include;
  - Excitability, nervousness, HBP, rebound congestion, wakefulness

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Cough symptoms

- Suppressants
  - Dextromethorphan products
  - Delsym

- Expectorants/Suppressants
  - Robitussin DM, Vicks, store generics
Sneezing / Runny Nose

- Antihistamine products
  - Benadryl
  - Chlor-trimeton
  - Coricidin HBP

- Side effects
  - Drowsiness
  - GI upset
  - Excessively dry mouth or nose
Multi-Symptom products

- Drixoral
- Actifed
- Comtrex
- NyQuil
- DayQuil
- Dimetapp
- Tylenol Cold
- Alka-Seltzer Plus
- Aleve Cold
- Contac
Miscellaneous Products

- Airborne
- Zicam
- Cold-Ease
- Theraflu
- Echinacea
- Vitamin C
Why Should Pharmacists Handle All Consultations?

- They are the trained drug experts.
- By law, it is the pharmacist who is the sole responsible person for all consulting issues.
- This, in no way, diminishes your value as a pharmacy technician. The input you contribute toward patient assistance is highly appreciated by every pharmacist.
Questions
References

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2. About.com
3. Consumer Healthcare Products Association
4. Contemporary Pediatrics
5. Infectious Diseases in Children
6. StrategyOne