

# Over the counter allergy medicines

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There are many medicines that you can buy over the counter (OTC) to treat allergy symptoms. Talk with your child's allergist or primary care provider about the best options for your child. Most often, providers suggest:

- Intranasal steroids (nose or nasal spray)
- Oral antihistamines (to swallow)
- Allergy eye drops

Other nasal sprays include nasal:

- Saline
- Antihistamines
- Decongestants
- Mast cell stabilizers

## Nasal sprays

Corticosteroid sprays work best. They help prevent and relieve:

- Stuffy nose
- Sneezing
- Runny nose

Side effects are not common if using nasal spray the right way. Side effects may include:

- A bad taste. This does not last long.
- Nasal irritation
- Nosebleeds

## How to use nasal spray:

"Criss-cross" and "nose to toes" technique

1. Have your child blow their nose.
2. Follow the instructions on the spray bottle for priming and activating it.
3. Tilt your child's head forward. This is "nose to toes."
4. Gently put the tip of the bottle in the nose. Avoid touching the septum (middle of the nose).
5. Point the tip toward the outer corner of the eye on the same side. This helps prevent spraying medicine on the septum and causing trauma. This is "criss-cross."
6. Close the other nostril with your finger.
7. Spray gently.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Over the counter allergy medicines, continued

The table includes generic and brand names for OTC nasal spray medicines. The dosing in the last column can be used for generic or brand of that specific medicine. Talk with your provider if you have questions.

Name	Type of spray	Age approved	Dosing
<b>Generic:</b> Budesonide  <b>Brand:</b> Rhinocort Allergy	Steroid 32 mcg/spray	6 years and older	<b>6 to 11 years:</b> – Start with 1 spray twice a day – Then do 1 or 2 sprays once a day  <b>12 years and older:</b> 1 or 2 sprays once a day
<b>Generic:</b> Triamcinolone  <b>Brands:</b> GoodSense Nasal Allergy Nasacort Allergy 24HR	Steroid 55 mcg/spray	2 years and older	<b>2 to 5 years:</b> 1 spray once a day  <b>6 to 11 years:</b> – Start with 1 spray once a day – Then do 1 or 2 sprays once a day
<b>Generic:</b> Fluticasone furoate  <b>Brand:</b> Flonase Sensimist	Steroid 27.5 mcg/spray	2 years and older	<b>2 to 11 years old:</b> – Start with 1 spray once a day – 1 or 2 sprays once a day  <b>12 years and older:</b> 2 sprays once a day
<b>Generic:</b> Fluticasone propionate  <b>Brand:</b> Flonase Allergy Relief	Steroid 50 mcg/spray	4 years and older	<b>4 to 11 years:</b> 1 spray once a day  <b>12 years and older:</b> 2 sprays once a day <u>or</u> 1 spray twice a day
<b>Generic:</b> Mometasone  <b>Brand:</b> Nasonex 24HR Allergy	Steroid 50 mcg/spray	2 years and older	<b>2 to 11 years:</b> 1 spray once a day  <b>12 years and older:</b> 2 sprays once a day
<b>Generic:</b> Azelastine  <b>Brands:</b> Astelin Astepro	Antihistamine	6 years and older	<b>6 to 11 years:</b> 1 spray in each nostril twice a day  <b>12 years and older:</b> 2 sprays in each nostril twice a day

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## Over the counter allergy medicines, continued

Name	Type of spray	Age approved	Dosing
<b>Generic:</b> Olopatadine  <b>Brand:</b> Patanase	Antihistamine	6 years and older	<b>6 to 11 years:</b> 1 spray in each nostril twice a day  <b>12 years and older:</b> 2 sprays in each nostril twice a day
<b>Generic:</b> Cromolyn sodium  <b>Brand:</b> Nasalcrom	Mast cell inhibitor	2 years and older	<b>2 years and older:</b> 1 spray in each nostril 3 to 4 times a day
<b>Generic:</b> Oxymetazoline  <b>Brands:</b> Afrin Store brands	Decongestant	2 years and older	<b>2 years and older (depending on brand):</b> 2 to 3 sprays in each nostril twice a day  <b>DO NOT use for more than 3 days unless advised by your provider</b>

### Antihistamines

The most commonly used OTC allergy medicines are antihistamines. Histamine is a chemical released by the immune system during an allergic reaction. It causes symptoms like congestion, runny nose and hives.

Antihistamines block histamine. These medicines may be:

- Liquid
- Tablets to dissolve under the tongue or swallow
- Nasal sprays
- Eye drops

The older types of antihistamine medicines can cause sleepiness and dry mouth, eyes and nose. The newer medicines do not cause these side effects.

Name	Age approved	Dosing
<b>Generic:</b> Cetirizine  <b>Brand:</b> Zyrtec	6 months and older	<b>6 to 11 months:</b> 2.5 mg once a day  <b>1 to 5 years:</b> 2.5 mg once or twice a day  <b>6 to 11 years:</b> 5 or 10 mg once a day  <b>12 years and older:</b> 10 mg once a day

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Name	Age approved	Dosing
<b>Generic:</b> Fexofenadine  <b>Brand:</b> Allegra	6 months and older	<b>6 months to 2 years:</b> 15 mg twice a day  <b>3 to 11 years:</b> 30 mg twice a day  <b>12 years and older:</b> 60 mg twice a day <u>or</u> 180 mg once a day
<b>Generic:</b> Loratadine  <b>Brand:</b> Claritin	2 years and older	<b>2 to 6 years:</b> 5 mg once a day  <b>7 years and older:</b> 10 mg once a day
<b>Generic:</b> Levocetirizine  <b>Brand:</b> Xyzal	6 years and older	<b>6 to 11 years:</b> 2.5 mg once a day  <b>12 years and older:</b> 5 mg once a day
<b>Generic:</b> Diphenhydramine  <b>Brand:</b> Benadryl	2 years and older	<b>2 to 5 years:</b> Follow your provider's instructions  <b>6 to 11 years:</b> 12.5 to 25 mg every 4 to 6 hours  <b>12 years and older:</b> 25 to 50 mg every 4 to 6 hours
<b>Generic:</b> Chlorpheniramine  <b>Brands:</b> Aller-Chlo Chlor-Mal  Ask your provider about others	6 years and older	<b>6 to 11 years:</b> 2 mg every 4 to 6 hours  <b>12 years and older:</b> 4 mg every 4 to 6 hours

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# Over the counter allergy medicines, continued

## Allergy eye drops

Allergy eye drops can be used to treat allergic conjunctivitis and can help relieve:

- Redness to the white part of the eyes
- Swelling around the eyes
- Itchy eyes

These drops are most often:

- Antihistamines
- Mast cell stabilizers
- A combination of antihistamine and mast cell stabilizers

Name	Type of eye drop	Age approved	Dosing
<b>Generic:</b> Azelastine 0.05%  <b>Brand:</b> Optivar  Ask your provider about others	Antihistamine	3 years and older	1 drop in each eye twice a day
<b>Generic:</b> Cromolyn  <b>Brand:</b> Crolom	Mast cell stabilizer	4 years and older	1 drop in affected eye 4 to 6 times a day
<b>Generic:</b> Ketotifen  <b>Brands:</b> Zaditor Alaway Zyrtec Itchy Eye	Combination	3 years and older	1 drop in each eye 2 to 3 times a day
<b>Generic:</b> Naphazoline/ Pheniramine Store generic  <b>Brands:</b> Naphcon A Opcon-A Visine-A	Antihistamine/ Decongestant	6 years and older	1 to 2 drops in affected eye up to 4 times a day  <b>Only use for a short period of time</b>

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Name	Type of eye drop	Age approved	Dosing
<b>Generic:</b> Olopatadine Store generic	Combination	2 years and older	<b>Patanol 0.1%</b> 1 drop in each eye twice a day every 6 to 8 hours
<b>Brands:</b> Patanol 0.1% Pataday 0.2% Pazeo 0.7%			<b>Pataday 0.2%</b> 1 drop in each eye once a day
			<b>Pazeo 0.7%</b> 1 drop in each eye once a day

### Decongestants

Decongestants are another type of allergy medicine your provider may recommend. They help relieve stuffy nose. They are often used with oral antihistamines.

These medicines may be:

- Liquid
- Pills
- Nasal sprays
- Eye drops

Phenylephrine is generally not advised as a decongestant as it does not work well. Only use if advised by your provider.

**Keep all medicine out of the reach of children.**

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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