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Home Treatments for Babies

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WebMD Feature

Reviewed by [Louise Chang, MD](#)

Parents have always looked to their gardens and pantries to treat common infant illness. Today, the use of complementary and alternative remedies is common not just in adults but also children. Whether it's a nip of prune juice to relieve constipation or an oatmeal bath to soothe itchy dry skin, natural remedies offer inexpensive strategies to ease uncomfortable symptoms.

But not all natural treatments are as benign as a spoonful of mashed prunes. Be sure to ask your child's doctor to make sure anything you use is safe.

What are some of the best home treatments for your wee one? Where can you turn for something that's safe and effective as well as baby friendly? WebMD asked the experts for tips on safe and effective home treatments for your child.

Decongest With Onion

A raw, sliced onion might not be your first choice as an air freshener for baby's room, but it can help break up congestion when junior has a cold.

Simply slice up an onion and place it on a plate next to the bed or crib. "The good old-fashioned onion is wonderful for a stuffy nose," says pediatrician Lauren Feder, MD, author of *Natural Baby and Childcare*. "The sulfur content in the onion draws out mucus and fluids in body. If your baby has a stuffy nose, it can loosen that up with no side effects except for the obvious odor in the room."

Breathe the Steam

Relief for your baby's clogged nose and cough may also be as close as the shower.

Author of *The Holistic Baby Guide: Alternative Care for Common Health Problems*, Randall Neustaedter, OMD, LAc, says steam up the bathroom, not the bedroom, to decongest little ones.

"If your baby has a stuffy nose, go into bathroom and steam it up. Then hold your baby in there for a while. You'll get more concentrated steam and your room doesn't get all wet. Humidifiers turn everything into a rain forest."

Chill a Fever With Lemon

Though fevers tend to scare parents, they are a sign that the body's immune system is working. While a fever in babies under the age of 3 months is cause for concern, most fevers do little more than make your baby feel out-of-sorts.

To help take the edge off a fever, slice a lemon over a bowl of warm water to capture the fruit's aromatic oils. Using a cotton cloth give your baby a "sponge bath" with the warm lemon water. The cooling properties of the lemon and evaporating water work together in reducing the fever, advises Feder.

"Make sure the water is not too cold," Feder says. "The idea here is not to shock the child."

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