MEDICATION FOR COLDS



Antihistamine - Decongestant and Relief medication for common colds

Drugs for stuffy nose and sinus problems, nasal congestion and common cold constitute the largest segment of the pharmaceutical industry. When used properly, these drugs provide relief from annoying symptoms which occur in almost all people at some time and in some chronically. Drugs in these categories are useful for relieving allergy symptoms, inflammation of upper respiratory infections such as sinusitis, common cold, flu and vasomotor rhinitis. These drugs do not cure allergies, infections, etc. but relieve the symptoms so that the patient feels more comfortable.

Antihistamines

Histamine is a chemical agent which can cause allergies or inflammation conditions such as congestion, sneezing and runny nose. Antihistamine drugs block the action of histamine and therefore reduce the allergic symptoms. For best results they should be taken before allergic symptoms occur. The most common side effect is drowsiness. This is not a problem when taken at bedtime, but patients who need to use them daily can suffer drowsiness with all its' consequences. It is not recommended for people who drive a car or operate hazardous machinery.

Decongestants

Congestion in the nose and sinuses is due to the swelling and expansion of blood vessels in the mucosa of the nose and airway. The mucosa of the nose has an abundance of high-capacity vessels on stretching. Histamine stimulates the dilation of these blood vessels causing them to swell. Decongestants cause vasoconstriction which assists the blood to leave the mucosa and vessels to shrink therefore allowing air to pass more easily. Decongestant substances are chemically related to adrenaline, a natural vasoconstrictor that is a kind of divider. So the side effect is restlessness (jittery). They can create difficulty sleeping and increased blood pressure and pulse frequency. They should not be used by people with hypertension, arrhythmia or heart disease, and in patients suffering from glaucoma.

COMBINATION

Theoretically to balance the side effects of drowsiness, antihistamines may be neutralized by the stimulation of decongestants. Possibly using various combinations. A patient may use several formulations for several months or years. After a time it may be necessary to change to another formulation when the first has lost its activity. No-one reacts the same as someone else; your doctor should regulate the right balance of dose. For example you may take only the antihistamine night and only decongestant by day. Or you can take an increasing dose of antihistamine at night and reduce the dose of decongestant. The opposite might work in the day.

RELIEVER	SYMPTOMS	EFFECTS
Antihistamines	Sneezing Catarrh Stuffy nose Itchy eyes Hyperemia	Drowsiness Dry mouth and runny nose
Decongestants	Blocked nose Hyperemia	Stimulation Increased heart rate Insomnia
COMBINATION	All the above	Any of the above

Relief medication for common colds

These mainly contain antihistamines and decongestants, and other ingredients such as cough suppressants. The doctor must choose the components that fit the patient's symptoms to help him.

Nasal Spray

These types of nasal spray usually contain decongestants for direct spray to the nasal mucosa. These can provide immediate relief from congestion due to constriction of blood vessels. The direct application creates a much stronger stimulation of the corresponding oral and impairs the blood circulation of the nose which after a few hours causes irritating vessels to dilate and increase the air supply again. This results in a reaction (rebound or bounce-back effect). The congestion returns. The patient feels the need to use the spray again and as it does, restarts the cycle spray - congestion - congestion reaction again, again spray. In babies this rhinitis can be installed within 2 days. In babies the treatment is deliberate interrupting the spray for 12-24h but adult cases may require oral decongestants, corticosteroids and sometimes can (after use for months or years continuously) even surgery. For this reason, do not use decongestant spray for longer than 7 days. The above description does not include the type of anti-allergy spray prescribed by your doctor for treatment of allergies.