



Pediatric Clinic
PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

Warning!

infant deaths and serious illness associated with cough and cold medicines

Cough and cold medicines may be purchased “over-the-counter” (without a prescription). They contain various combinations of nasal decongestants, antihistamines, cough suppressants, and expectorants. Parents often use these medicines in attempts to temporarily relieve the symptoms of upper respiratory infections in children less than two years old.

During 2004-2005, at least 1500 children in this under-two age group were treated in U.S. emergency rooms for overdoses and serious side effects associated with these medicines. At least three infants *died* from toxic effects of these medicines.

There are no FDA-approved dosing recommendations for prescribing these medicines under age two. The dosages at which cough and cold medications can cause illness or death in children less than two years old are not known.

These medicines have not been shown to be effective in relieving symptoms of colds in children less than two years old. In fact, controlled studies of these medicines have concluded that they are **not effective** in reducing acute cough and other symptoms of colds.

The members of the pediatric staff at Evans Army Community Hospital do not recommend the use of cold and cough medications in children less than two years old. They provide no benefit and can cause harm.

The most effective known treatments of cold symptoms in infants and young children include the use of a humidifier, nasal saline drops and a nasal bulb syringe.