

## PHARMACY

Drug Information

# Medications to Treat Flu



### What is Flu?

- An infectious disease caused by Influenza viruses.
- Flu is usually transmitted through the air by coughing or sneezing which creates fine droplets containing the virus.
- Flu can be spread through contact with body fluids or contaminated surfaces.

### Common Symptoms and Signs of Flu

- Fever (Temperature  $>38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$ )
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Runny nose and/or blocked nose
- Fatigue and/or muscle aches

### What are the Medications Used to Treat Symptoms of Flu?

Medication(s)	Indication(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paracetamol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For muscle/body aches, fever</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loratadine</li> <li>• Cetirizine</li> <li>• Fexofenadine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For runny nose</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pseudoephedrine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For blocked nose</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dextromethorphan</li> <li>• Pholcodine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For cough</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lozenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For sore throat</li> </ul>

- These medications provide symptomatic relief only, where the medications only treat the symptoms but not the cause.
- The infection usually resolves on its own in one week's time.

- The doctor may prescribe antibiotics if your infection is caused by bacteria.
- If you have multiple flu medications from more than one doctor, please check with a pharmacist or doctor before taking them together.

### How are the Medications Administered / Taken?

Medication	Recommended Directions of Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paracetamol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take two 500 mg tablets every 6 hours when necessary</li> <li>• Do not exceed 8 tablets a day</li> <li>• Do not take multiple paracetamol-containing products</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loratadine</li> <li>• Cetirizine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take one 10 mg tablet once daily when necessary</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fexofenadine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take one 180 mg tablet once daily when necessary</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loratadine + Pseudoephedrine (5 mg/120 mg)</li> <li>• Cetirizine + Pseudoephedrine (5 mg/120 mg)</li> <li>• Fexofenadine + Pseudoephedrine (60 mg/120 mg)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take one tablet every 12 hours when necessary</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dextromethorphan (15 mg/5mL)</li> <li>• Pholcodine (5 mg/mL)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take two 5 mL spoonful of syrup every 8 hours when necessary</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lozenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suck one lozenge every 3 hours when necessary</li> </ul>

- If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, take only the usual dose. Never take a double dosage to make up for the missed dose.

### Can the Medications be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- It is important that you inform the doctor, pharmacist about other medications – including over-the-counter medications, supplements and traditional/herbal remedies – that you are currently taking, as they may affect the way you benefit from the medications to treat flu.

### What are the Important Side Effects?

- Medications prescribed by your doctor should be beneficial for your condition even though they may result in some inevitable side effects.

Medication Name	Side Effect	Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loratadine, Cetirizine, Fexofenadine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dry mouth</li> <li>• Dry eyes</li> <li>• Headache</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suck on ice chips</li> <li>• Use eye drops</li> <li>• Relaxation techniques or meditation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pseudoephedrine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insomnia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid taking the medication before bedtime</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dextromethorphan, Pholcodine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drowsiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not drive or operate machinery when on the medication</li> </ul>

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

### **Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?**

- It is important to inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.
- Wear a mask or cover your nose / mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Dispose the tissue in the trash bin after use.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Stay at home and limit contact with others.

### **What Else can I do to Help My Condition?**

- Get plenty of rest and drink more water.

### **How do I Store These Medications?**

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.

