

**Are oral antihistamine-decongestant-analgesic combinations effective against the common cold?**

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<b>Clinical Question</b>	Are antihistamine-decongestant-analgesic combinations effective in reducing the duration of symptoms and alleviating symptoms (general feeling of illness, nasal congestion, rhinorrhoea, sneezing, and cough) in children and adults with the common cold?
<b>Bottom Line</b>	This review evaluated four combinations, the combination of antihistamine-decongestant, antihistamine-analgesic combinations, analgesic-decongestant combinations and antihistamine-decongestant-analgesic combinations. All four combinations showed a general benefit in adults and children aged over six years. Where pooling of results was possible, we found an NNTB of four for the combination of antihistamine-decongestant. The combination of antihistamine-analgesic was beneficial in the two trials, and the combination of analgesic-decongestant was beneficial in the one trial providing data on this outcome. The combination of antihistamine-analgesic-decongestant was more effective than control in two of the five trials, one of which was large and of high methodological quality.
<b>Caveat</b>	Adverse effects were not always clearly reported, but based on the available data this review found that adverse effects were usually more frequent with the active treatment than with control. Dry mouth and insomnia were more frequent with antihistamine-decongestant, and dizziness was more frequent with analgesic-decongestant combinations. The combinations antihistamine-analgesic-decongestant and antihistamine-analgesic were well tolerated, which is rather remarkable as they contain similar products as the other two combinations.
<b>Context</b>	Although combination formulas containing antihistamines, decongestants, and/or analgesics are sold over-the-counter in large quantities for the common cold, the evidence for their effectiveness is limited.
<b>Cochrane Systematic Review</b>	De Sutter AIM, Eriksson L, van Driel ML. Oral antihistamine-decongestant-analgesic combinations for the common cold. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2022, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD004976. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004976.pub4. This review contains 30 trials with a total of 6,304 participants.

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Systematic review link:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD004976.pub4/full>