

Can decongestants spike your blood pressure? What to know about hypertension and cold medicine

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It's the season for respiratory viruses and the cough, congestion and sore throats they bring. There are many options for over-the-counter (OTC)

remedies and relief, but if you have high blood pressure, you may want to take a closer look at the label. Some may contain warnings that advise against taking if you have high blood pressure. Others contain high levels of sodium, which can also increase blood pressure.

Some OTC decongestants contain pseudoephedrine, a drug that works by constricting the [blood vessels](#) to reduce nasal swelling. But with those blood vessels narrowed, blood pressure increases. For the 122 million Americans with hypertension, decongestants can raise an already elevated [blood pressure](#) to dangerous levels and increase the chance of heart attack and stroke.

Many OTC cold and flu medicines now have a version formulated specifically for those with [high blood pressure](#). Allergy medicines can also relieve stuffy or runny noses without [adverse side effects](#), just as cough medicines and expectorants to help clear mucus.

If you need relief from cold and sinus congestion without medication, try these at-home remedies:

- Use a saline rinse to move saltwater through the nasal passages to clear out mucus.
- Drink extra fluids to help thin the mucus.
- Use a humidifier to moisten the air in your home and help clear your sinuses.
- Get plenty of rest.

If your symptoms persist, and you're concerned about which decongestant is the best for you, talk to your doctor.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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