

A safe cough and cold remedy for infants?

In 2008, The Star (March 28, 2008) reported that the deaths of at least five toddlers in the UK were linked to cough and cold remedies.

Issued by [Write Scene](#) 30 Jan 2009

The US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention reported that during 2004-2005 more than 1,519 children under the age of two years were taken to U.S. emergency departments for side effects associated with cough and cold medications. The world over pharmacies have rapidly taken medications off the shelf and many pediatricians continue to advise parents to try alternative treatments before turning to conventional cold and cough syrups and medication.

However this may be easier said than done for parents that are spending many sleepless nights with a child that seems to be in agony from an unrelenting cough that will not seem to let up no matter what they do. Surely there must be some relief available for these concerned individuals?

The greatest danger associated with cold and flu remedies in children seems to be the potential of accidental overdose, especially when administering to infants under the age of two. The deaths of three infants six months or younger in 2005, led to an investigation that showed the children all had high levels of the nasal decongestant pseudo-ephedrine, up to 14 times the amount recommended for children aged two to 12.

However, "Not all cold and flu remedies are potentially fatal," says Dr Hanns Haerberlein at the University of Bonn, Germany. "Research has shown that for hundreds of years, many people have trusted in the effective healing power of wild-growing medicinal ivy for the treatment of inflammatory illnesses of the respiratory tract." The handed down knowledge on this force of nature has been further developed during years of intensive research.

"Hedera helix (Ivy leaf) combats the typical complaints of bronchitis: increased formation of viscous mucus, shortness of breath and irritation of the throat. Troublesome and painful coughing is calmed, but not blocked which is important for being able to cough up the mucus and thereby allow for trouble-free deep breathing," he adds.

Astell Laboratories recognised the dilemma that healthcare professionals face in prescribing cough and cold medications and has invited local and international experts to offer pertinent views and research on the topic at the Seminar on Drug Safety in Sport & Children.

Dr Hanns Haerberlein, a distinguished Professor for cell biology and molecular drug research in the Department of Physiological Chemistry at the University of Bonn in Germany will be addressing the audience on the mode of action, safety and efficacy of Hedera helix - an ingredient indicated for the symptomatic treatment of respiratory tract inflammation, accompanied by coughing. Hedera helix is extremely well tolerated and has been proven to achieve excellent results in children and infants suffering from acute respiratory disorders, colds, coughs and bronchitis. The excellent safety profile of Hedera helix allows for administration to children younger than two years - something pediatricians have been hoping for.

The seminar will take place 24 February 2009 in Johannesburg at Melrose Arch, 25 February 2009 in Cap

Town at BOE/Regus, Waterfront Clock Tower and the 26 February 2009 in Durban at the Hilton Hotel and will begin at 18:30 for 19:00.

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