



HEALTH ▸ HYGIENE ▸ HOME

KIDS' UNTREATED COUGH AND COLD SYMPTOMS AFFECT ENERGY LEVELS AND FOCUS, SAY MOMS AND SCHOOL NURSES

New Survey Reveals That Moms Want Guidance From Physicians, Nurses About How to Best Combat Kids' Colds and When Symptom Relief Is the Best Option

PARSIPPANY, N.J., Jan. 21, 2016 – Mothers nationwide are struggling to treat their children's cough and cold symptoms, according to a new survey released today by RB (Reckitt Benckiser). With an estimated 22 million school days lost each year due to colds alone, according to the CDC,¹ this survey of more than 1,300 participants throughout the country looks at what's happening on the frontlines of the seasonal assault on children's health. The results are illuminating—despite the frequency with which children get sick each cough and cold season and the numerous recognized negative effects of coughing, sniffing, and congestion, many mothers are underutilizing healthcare professionals for advice on the best ways to determine treatment options.

"School nurses understand that mothers might need additional support in the face of their child's suffering during cough and cold season. Along with mothers, we provide the best care possible to children to help them feel better quickly and get back to the classroom and learning as soon as possible," said Donna J. Mazyck, MS, RN, NCSN, and executive director of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN). "Directing moms to have a conversation with their pediatrician to learn how to better navigate cough and cold symptoms can help everyone feel better."

NASN is collaborating with RB on this educational effort to raise awareness about these survey results and encourage parents to reach out to their healthcare provider to determine when it is appropriate to give their child an over-the-counter medication.

The survey looked at the experiences of 1,303 participants (1,002 mothers of children pre-K through eighth grade; 301 school nurses of children pre-K through eighth grade) to better understand how cough and cold symptoms affect the everyday lives of children, and how mothers and school nurses are navigating this challenging time of year. If left untreated, cough and cold symptoms can have significant and negative effects on children in school.

"Many moms believe that coughs and colds are a seasonal annoyance that they are powerless against, but the reality is that when armed with accurate information, they can and should take swift, confident action to treat their kids' cough and cold symptoms," said Laurence Flint, MD, and one of the authors involved in developing the study. "Healthcare professionals can help provide mothers with guidance about which treatment options may alleviate a child's symptoms. In addition to hydration and rest, I encourage mothers to consider over-the-counter medications, which can help provide symptom relief and allow kids to feel better faster."

Establishing a treatment plan before a child gets sick is especially important, given many moms do not feel equipped to tackle cough and cold symptoms with confidence. Though they can see that their children are suffering—primarily in terms of energy level and focus—when symptoms go unaddressed, they feel they have to let the cold run its course. The survey reveals:

- Just 23 percent of mothers surveyed would consider contacting their healthcare professional for counsel on how to best manage cough and cold symptoms, and only 29 percent of mothers would contact their healthcare professional for advice about over-the-counter medications.
- Of school nurses surveyed, 64 percent reported that many mothers worry they're not doing enough to alleviate symptoms. School nurses can be a valuable health resource for mothers, as they strive to keep their children healthy during cough and cold season.
- Around seven in 10 moms (73 percent) want guidance from a pediatrician on which type of over-the-counter (OTC) medication to give their child or whether to administer these types of medications at all (69 percent).

An effective treatment plan is crucial, given the effect cough/cold symptoms have on children, according to mothers and school nurses. Not surprisingly, these symptoms have a negative impact on the ability of children to focus, perform in the classroom, and sleep, and lead to missed time in school for children pre-K to eighth grade. Consider the following survey statistics about the peak cough and cold season months of December through February:

- **Impact on Focus**
 - 84 percent of school nurses report that children visit their office because they're finding it hard to focus or participate in class
 - 43 percent of moms report that when their child has a cold, he/she has a harder time focusing and takes longer to complete tasks
- **Impact on Energy Level**
 - 78 percent of moms and 90 percent of school nurses say health issues during cough and cold season disrupt a child's energy level
- **Missed Class Time**
 - School nurses report not only an uptick in office visits (80 percent) and more time spent in their office (75 percent), but 68 percent say they also see the same students more than once during this period, often to address similar symptoms
 - More than half (51 percent) of mothers note that health issues during this time disrupt their children's attendance in school
 - And while 43 percent of mothers would like guidance on when to keep their children home from school, only 19 percent consult a pediatrician for this reason--despite the fact that mothers report that their children get sick an average of 3 times during each cough and cold season
- **Impact on Sleep**
 - Sleep deficiencies run rampant, as 78 percent of mothers report that when their children are sick, they are more likely to be overtired, while 52 percent of mothers believe their children get less sleep when they're sick. Sleep allows the body to rest and recover, which is important for growing children, who often have busy schedules with schoolwork and extracurricular activities.

These survey findings were presented at the June 2015 American Cough Conference and will be published in an upcoming publication of the journal *Lung*. Reputable market research vendor Kelton Global fielded this survey in late 2014. Developed as a collaboration between RB and NASN, the survey leveraged key insights from pediatrician Dr. Laurence Flint and school nurse Marylin Morrissey. For more information about the survey, please visit the following link: www.nasn.org.

About the National Association of School Nurses

The National Association of School Nurses is a nonprofit specialty nursing organization, organized in 1968 and incorporated in 1977, representing school nurses exclusively. NASN has nearly 16,000 members and 50 affiliates, including the District of Columbia and overseas. The mission of NASN is to optimize student health and learning by advancing the practice of school nursing. To learn more about NASN, please visit us on the Web at www.nasn.org or call 866-627-6767.

About RB

RB* is the world's leading consumer health and hygiene company. The company has operations in over 60 countries, with headquarters in London, Dubai, and Amsterdam, and sales in most countries across the globe. The company employs approximately 37,000 people worldwide.

Inspired by a purpose to deliver innovative solutions for healthier lives and happier homes, RB is in the top 20 of companies listed on the London Stock Exchange. We are the global No. 1 or No. 2 in the majority of our fast-growing categories, driven by an exceptional rate of innovation. Our health, hygiene, and home portfolio is led by our global Powerbrands including: Nurofen, Strepsils, Gaviscon, Mucinex, Durex, Scholl, Clearasil, Lysol, Dettol, Veet, Harpic, Cillit Bang, Mortein, Finish, Vanish, Calgon, Air Wick, Woolite and French's. Our Powerbrands represent 80% of our net revenue.

For more information, visit www.rb.com.

*RB is the trading name of Reckitt Benckiser group of companies

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Reference:

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