

5 Ways You Can Use Humidifier For Cold and Flu



Winter is the time of the year that every mum dreads. The kids drag themselves home from school with a runny nose and endless coughing. At the same time, their husbands moan in bed from the incurable disease known as “man-flu”. The bins in the house are piling up with wet tissue, and the medicine cabinet is full. [Emma Rosenblum](#), from Elle, witnesses the competition between her sons in getting colds and flu every winter. Despite stuffing her kids in multiple layers, they still get runny nose, cough and ear infections. When the kids recovered, Emma and her husband took turns to get sick. The paediatrician told her “little kids get sick a lot. They’re all pale. Winter is the worst.

Cold and influenza (flu) are both viral respiratory illnesses that are caused by different viruses. Despite displaying similar symptoms, a cold is less severe than flu. The notable difference between a cold and flu is that flu can cause nausea, fever, body aches and pain, chills and sweat. It is a quite common misconception that there is a cure for a cold or flu. [Queensland Health](#) explains that antibiotics treat infections caused by bacteria. However, as mentioned above, viruses are the cause of colds and flu. There is not much you can do, but to wait for your body's immune system to fight off the viral infections by activating its immune response.

The Social and Economic Costs of Cold & Flu

[Health Direct](#) reports that an average adult suffers from two to four colds per year and children can get as many as ten colds per year. According to the [Australia Institute of Health and Welfare](#), there are more deaths due to conditions related to the circulatory system, pneumonia, influenza, and sudden infant death syndrome between June and August. Flu causes an average of 13,500 hospitalisations each year and more than 3,000 deaths among Australians aged over 50 years.

According to the "[Economic Report into the Cost of Influenza to the Australian Health System](#)", the economic cost of health care related to colds and flu is enormous. GP consultations alone cost the Australian Government about \$140 million annually in 2007, and this cost is increasing each year.

On 27th Feb 2019, [The Selector](#) reported that each year the loss of productivity due to influenza is about \$7 billion for employers in Australia. The direct effect of this economic phenomenon is very apparent in small to medium businesses (SMBs). The significant loss of staff working hours and loss of potential sales are undoubtedly hurting SMBs. To stay in business, SMBs has to recoup these losses through other means, including higher prices and reduction in wages.

Humidity Between 40% to 60% Is Better For Your Health

While the medical community has no effective cure for colds and flu, you can do something to help you and your family to feel better. You could take plenty of rest and drink plenty of water to help your body fight off the viruses. Researches have also shown that humidifiers can decrease the chance of contracting colds and flu, shortening the recovery time, help you to breathe with ease, and sleep better.

The relative humidity drops below 40% in most parts of Australia during winter. The study "Indirect Health Effects of Relative Humidity in Indoor Environments" concludes that the ideal indoor relative humidity level for better health should range between 40% to 60%. The relative humidity outside of this range can result in serious health consequences. Children without humidification are seven times more likely to be absent from school due to colds and flu. A case study found that the level of absenteeism for a call centre during the winter periods dropped dramatically after the installation

of humidifiers.

1. Humidifiers Help To Prevent Influenza

[A study](#) conducted by a team of researchers, from West Virginia University and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, found that humidifiers may reduce the risk of developing the flu. The researchers found that a relative humidity level of above 40% rapidly deactivated influenza virus, therefore, making them much less infectious.

[Myatt et al.](#) found that portable home humidifiers increase the relative humidity to a comfortable range for different bedroom sizes. This increase in relative humidity resulted in a decrease of airborne virus (including influenza).

The researchers suggest that humidifiers operate in larger environments may increase relative humidity during the cold winter months. This aids in the prevention of colds and flu spreading between workers, therefore, improving productivity during the winter.

2. Humidifiers help tremendously you breathe easier.

Relative humidity can drop below 30% at night in typical winter months in most parts of Australia. The low relative humidity causes the nose and airways to dry up, therefore, making it harder to breathe. Common cold and flu symptoms such as a runny nose, sinus congestion, coughing, and a sore throat often make breathing exhausting. Many households in Australia use heaters to stay warm during winter, resulting in even lower humidity. When the air is dehydrated, some people may experience nosebleeds.

[Zhao et al.](#) found that air temperature and relative humidity affect perceived nasal congestion through heat loss in the nasal mucus and trigeminal sensory input. Low humidity significantly increases the perceived nasal congestion. Humidifiers help moisturise the nasal, throat and lung passages, making it easier for air to pass through. Often, when walking outside on a wintry night, we cover our mouth and nose with the palm of our hands to build up the humidity and temperature to breath easily.

A renowned osteopathic physician, [Doctor Joseph Mercola](#), recommends using a humidifier to increase the relative humidity to help with breathing during the colder months. The humidifiers are also helpful when using air conditioners during the hotter months.

[Everyday Health](#) reported that Doctor Scott P. Stringer, from the University of Mississippi Medical Center, confirmed that the extra humidity from humidifiers would relieve congested sinuses. Dr Amber Luong, from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, also agrees with Dr Stringer's suggestion.

3. Humidifiers help you feel better quicker

Keeping your throat and nasal passages moist can with the healing process and should reduce symptoms like sneezing and coughing. A humidifier helps to break down mucus and expel from the body quickly. As a result, you cough less and minimise inflammation of the airways.

One of the leading pharmaceutical companies that focuses on people who suffer from a cold and the flu, Vicks, pointed out that by adding humidity into our environment, it will keep your nasal passages moist. The extra moisture will help to drain the mucus fast. Therefore, you can recover from a runny nose quicker.

According to the [US National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#), humidifiers may also reduce the symptoms of acute bronchitis and help you to stay comfortable.

4. Humidifiers help ward off future illnesses

Nasal hair and mucus filter out large particles preventing them from entering the delicate structures in your respiratory system. Microscopic hair, called cilia, is naturally found along your respiratory passages. Cilia move in a sweeping motion to clean the air passages. Cilia capture bacteria, germs, dust, and other foreign particles from entering your nasal passages. The mucus produced by cells in the trachea and bronchial tubes keeps air passages moist and aids in stopping dust, bacteria and viruses, allergy-causing substances, and other substances from entering the lungs.

Humidifiers help to keep your nasal airways moist to allow cilia and the mucus gland to work effectively. This mechanism prevents future illnesses by filtering out the disease-causing pathogens in the air.

5. Humidifiers aid you sleep on cold winter nights.

Humidifiers help your nasal passages and throat to stay hydrated. With hydrated nasal passages and throat, you will find it easy to breathe. You should feel comfortable and fall asleep quicker. You will also sleep through the night comfortably. A good night's sleep can help your body to be better equipped to fend off illness, as well as recover more quickly if you do get sick.

What Type Of Humidifier Is Good For a Cold and Flu

There are many types of humidifiers on the market today. It can be confusing trying to know which model is most superior for relieving cold and flu. Each type of humidifier has its advantages and disadvantages. The type of humidifiers that work best for a cold and flu is dependent on your preference, circumstances, and budget. Each works to alleviate cold and flu symptoms to certain a degree.

Some manufacturers, retailers and blogs claim the only humidifiers that help

with cold and flu are vaporisers. They claim that “warm steam relaxes the throat muscles, loosens congestion, eases the cough reflex, soothes a sore throat and helps to keep your little one sleeping comfortably”. However, by the time the water vapour reaches your nose, its temperature has already cooled down to near room temperature. Therefore, it has no “warming” effect on the body.

Essential Oils Help You Recover Fast

We recommend choosing a humidifier that also able to diffuser essential oil. The diffusers will assist you in recovering quicker from cold and flu. Essential oils have been used for thousands of years by ancient Egyptians and the Ancient Chinese for medicinal benefits. Some of the top essential oils to help with cold and flu are:

- Lemon clears your nasal passages and allows for steady breathing.
- Lavender helps with sleep, relieves stress, fatigue, depression and headaches.
- Peppermint reduces coughs, sinusitis, and throat infections.
- Thyme possesses antibacterial properties to help fight respiratory infections.
- [Eucalyptus possesses antibiotic properties](#) that help fight against cold and flu, and relieve fevers.
- Tea tree oil inhibits bacterial growth and fights infections.
- Chamomile possesses antiviral and antibacterial properties that relieve cold and flu symptoms.
- Clove (eugenol) possesses antiviral and antifungal properties to clean surfaces or air.
- Cinnamon cleans surfaces or air.

[Rosemary possesses antibacterial and antifungal properties](#) and is a non-toxic way to clean surfaces or air.

Health Warnings

Some manufacturers, retailers and blogs claim that humidifiers can help with snoring. Some factors that cause snoring are the anatomy of your mouth and sinuses, alcohol consumption, allergies, a cold, and your weight. There is not enough scientific evidence to support that humidifiers help with snoring. If you have allergies or sinuses caused by a cold and the flu, you may try out a humidifier. However, generally snoring is a manifestation of a deeper health issue. Only sleep studies can work out the cause and the treatment for snoring.

There are some specific usages and maintenance that you must follow for each type of humidifiers to reduce the danger of health-related issues. For example, cool mist humidifier should use clean tap water or distilled water when possible.

Suggestions

We have a range of beautiful cool-mist humidifier & essential diffusers you may like to try. The most popular designs, as selected by our customers, are the [Aroma Bloom](#) range.

We have three essential oil blends that will help you through the winter months:

- [Breathe](#)
- [Winter Rescue](#)
- [Immune Booster](#)