



# Good Neighbor Script

INSPIRATION FOR LIVING WELL FROM *GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY* | DECEMBER 2025

## How to Manage Common Side Effects of Cough and Cold Medicines

During cold and flu season, you may reach for over-the-counter (OTC) cough and cold medicines to manage symptoms. However, these medications can sometimes cause unpleasant side effects. Here's what to expect and how to feel better.

### Drowsiness

Respiratory viruses can often cause fatigue, and certain medications can worsen this condition.

Take any medications with a "may cause drowsiness" or "nighttime" label before bed to allow them to take effect. If you're feeling drowsy, take a nap during the day, and get a good night's sleep. Rest helps you recover and strengthens your immune system.

### Upset stomach

Whenever you start a new medicine, it can cause nausea. Unless directed otherwise, take your medicine with bland food, such as crackers, potatoes, plain toast, or rice.

### Dry mouth, nose, or throat

Your body can lose fluids from coughing and blowing your nose. Decongestant medicines used to relieve a stuffy nose can also cause dehydration.

To stay well hydrated, the National Library of Medicine (NLM) recommends caffeine-free fluids, fresh fruits, vegetables, and soup. This approach helps thin your mucus, making it easier to clear through coughing or blowing your nose.

To relieve dry mouths or nasal passages, the Mayo Clinic recommends using a cool-mist vaporizer or humidifier in your home. Saline nasal sprays can also help.

### Constipation

With dehydration comes constipation, especially for older adults. Prevent constipation by incorporating more fiber into your diet through beans or leafy greens, such as adding kale or escarole to your chicken soup. Harvard Health also recommends taking a fiber supplement with psyllium seed or methylcellulose. If those options bother your stomach, try a supplement with guar fiber instead.

### Side effects in children

OTC cough and cold medicines can have dangerous and even fatal side effects for babies and young children. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends avoiding these medications for children younger than four years of age. For children between the ages of 4 and 6, these medicines should only be given as directed by a doctor. For older children, follow label directions.

### When to call your doctor

For most people, OTC cold and flu medicines are safe to use if you follow the label directions and dosing. The NLM recommends calling your doctor if you develop a rash or if any of these side effects are severe, get worse, or do not go away:

- Dizziness or lightheadedness.
- Drowsiness.
- Nervousness or restlessness.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Stomach pain.

### How your pharmacist can help

Before starting any new OTC medication, you can ask your pharmacist for a medication review. This review can help you know what side effects to expect, how to manage them, and when to call your doctor. Your pharmacist can also:

- Help choose a cold and flu medicine based on your symptoms. Taking medications you don't need can cause side effects.
- Make sure any OTC medicines are safe for your existing health conditions. According to the American Heart Association, decongestants — medications with pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine — can increase blood pressure.
- Check for interactions with other medicines you take. These can make side effects worse.
- Make sure you don't take too much of the same active ingredient, especially acetaminophen. This medication is often found in OTC and prescription painkillers and in multi-symptom cough and cold medicines. Taking too much acetaminophen can cause liver damage or failure.

## HEALTH & FITNESS

### Walking Pneumonia in Kids: What Parents Need To Know

Walking pneumonia is a mild lung infection caused by various bacteria and viruses, and it gets its name because kids often don't feel sick enough to stay home.

#### Symptoms of walking pneumonia

Symptoms can vary, but they include the following: cough, fatigue, low-grade fever (often 101°F or lower), chills, headache, sore throat, congestion, ear pain, chest or stomach pain, vomiting, trouble eating, fast or labored breathing, wheezing, joint pain, and rashes.

#### How is walking pneumonia treated?

If the pneumonia is bacterial, treatment typically involves a 5-to-10-day course of antibiotics. Encourage your child to drink fluids throughout the day, especially if they have a fever, and use acetaminophen or ibuprofen to reduce pain and fever. Avoid OTC cough suppressants unless you consult your child's pediatrician; coughing helps clear mucus from the lungs.

It may take one to two weeks for the infection to clear up and a month or more for the cough to subside.

#### Is walking pneumonia contagious?

Yes, walking pneumonia is contagious. However, your child is less likely to pass it on to others once they start antibiotics.

#### How to prevent spreading

- Keep your child home until symptoms improve and they've been on antibiotics for a few days.
- Teach them to sneeze or cough into their elbow or tissue.
- Avoid sharing towels, eating utensils, and drinking glasses. Practice good hand hygiene.
- Disinfect high-touch surfaces regularly.



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## DECEMBER RECIPE

# Marsala Chicken Meatballs with Parmesan Polenta

Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time	Serves
25 minutes	30 minutes	55 minutes	4

Tender, lean chicken meatballs in a flavorful mushroom Marsala sauce sit on a pillow of creamy Parmesan polenta.

### Ingredients

1 medium onion, minced (divided)  
 3 cloves garlic, minced (divided)  
 1/3 cup oats  
 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese (divided)  
 4 tablespoons minced fresh parsley (divided)  
 1 large egg  
 2 tablespoons milk  
 1 teaspoon salt (divided)  
 1/8 teaspoon ground pepper  
 1 pound ground chicken  
 1 tablespoon olive oil  
 8 ounces crimini (baby bella) mushrooms, sliced  
 1 tablespoon flour  
 1 1/2 cups chicken stock  
 1/3 cup Marsala wine  
 1 cup polenta

### Tools

Cutting board and chef's knife  
 Large mixing bowl  
 Measuring spoons and cups  
 Spatula  
 Whisk  
 Sheet pan  
 Sauté pan and saucepan

### KIDS CAN!

- Measure the ingredients
- Help shape the meatballs
- Stir the Parmesan into the polenta

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F, and position the rack in the middle. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper or foil.
2. In a bowl, mix half of the onion, half of the garlic, oats, 1/4 cup of Parmesan, 2 tablespoons of parsley, egg, milk, and 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Add chicken, and combine.
3. Form the mixture into one-inch meatballs (about 24), and place on the prepared sheet pan. Bake for 15 minutes, turning after 10 minutes, until golden brown.
4. While the meatballs bake, heat olive oil in a pan, and sauté the remaining onion, garlic, and mushrooms over medium-high heat for 15 minutes, or until softened and caramelized. Lower the heat to medium if the vegetables start to burn.
5. Sprinkle flour over the mushroom mixture, stir, and cook for 30 seconds. Add chicken stock and Marsala wine. Boil until thickened.
6. Add the meatballs to the sauce, and simmer on low for 10 minutes, turning occasionally — season with extra salt, if needed, and the remaining parsley.
7. Bring 3 cups of water and 1/2 teaspoon of salt to a boil. Whisk in the polenta, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the remaining 1/2 cup of Parmesan.
8. Spread the polenta on a platter or dish, and top with the meatballs and sauce.



For more recipes, scan this QR code, or visit [www.mygnp.com/recipes](http://www.mygnp.com/recipes).

## HEALTHY LIVING

## 3 Ways to Avoid the Winter Blues



01

Avoid being in the dark all day.



02

Aim to exercise for 30 to 60 minutes daily.



03

Find an activity that will make you happy.



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## Product Spotlight



The winter season puts your immune system to the test. Count on Good Neighbor Pharmacy immune support essentials to help keep your defenses strong all month long.



Good Neighbor Pharmacy has been named Retailer of the Year by Chain Drug Review!

As a proud member of the Good Neighbor Pharmacy network, we're honored to be part of a community of independent pharmacies that go above and beyond for their patients every day.

Thank you for trusting us with your care. We're grateful to serve this community as your neighborhood pharmacy.