

[IMAGE]

## Cough With COVID? Cough Syrup Might Be Dangerous

By Editorial Staff

What's the first thing most people do when they experience a cough that doesn't go away after a short period of time? Run to the medicine cabinet and get some cough syrup. Between flu season and COVID-19, cough syrup, lozenges and similar products are likely in short supply.

But hold on; new research suggests if you've tested positive for the coronavirus (or suspect you may have it, since that cough may be the only symptom if you're at low risk for complications and otherwise asymptomatic), an ingredient in many cough medicines, including syrups, lozenges and capsules, may make things worse.

The ingredient is dextromethorphan, and the study in *Nature* suggests it may actually boost replication of the novel coronavirus. While the results were obtained in laboratory conditions only (not in human subjects), it's certainly cause for reflection if you're suffering from a cough and pondering the safest, most effective way to treat it.

cough syrup - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Speaking of which, natural remedies for cough are certainly available and negate the need to take cough medicines containing dextromethorphan or any other ingredient that may put your health in jeopardy. For example, one study involving children ages 2-18 with upper respiratory infections found that administration of buckwheat honey (1/2-2 teaspoons prior to bedtime, depending on age) reduced cough frequency and improved sleep compared to children who received no honey or honey-flavored dextromethorphan.\*

*\*Note that current Food and Drug Administration guidelines prohibit use of cough and cold medicines by children under the age of 4, although some have called for the age to be raised to at least 6 or even older.*

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