

**Personal Health**

Monday, December 10, 2007

## **A sweet cold remedy for kids that's cheap, natural, available**

With new warnings that most over-the-counter cough medicines for children don't work, what's a parent to do?

Researchers at Pennsylvania State University's College of Medicine have come up with a sweet answer: honey.

In a study of 105 children aged 2 to 18 with infections of the upper respiratory tract, the sticky stuff was significantly better than no treatment at all. On a 7-point scale, parents reported a 2.5-point improvement in their children's ability to sleep after they took a teaspoon or two of honey. Honey also seemed to reduce cough severity and frequency, though it is not considered safe for children under 12 months.

The World Health Organization has cited honey as a potential cough remedy, but the study, in this month's Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine, was apparently the first formal look at the issue, says lead author Ian M. Paul.

"It's easily available, and pretty cheap," Paul says. "And it's pretty appealing for most people because it's a natural remedy."

— Tom Avril