

SUMMIT

Naturopathic News

Cold and Flu Prevention (and treatment if necessary)

Viruses cause cold and flu, in fact “Flu” is short for influenza virus. Viruses are fragile and die with simple soap and water when on your hands or exposed surfaces. Viruses live best in warm fluids, and complete their life cycle inside our cells. One of the most effective ways our body has to kill virus, is to create a fever of over 101°Fahrenheit. Antibiotics are useless against virus, and if used for a flu virus, can weaken your immune system, damage your digestive flora balance and leave you at greater risk for infection. We call something a cold if the immune system's inflammatory and mucous-producing defenses make things hurt (sore throat) and get congested (stuffy nose, ear infection). If a cold or flu weakens the body's defenses enough, bacteria will grow, and this is when antibiotics have their place. You can tell when you are developing a bacterial infection when your mucous turns green. Yellow mucous is a sign of slight infection, which can still be treated without antibiotics. If a round of antibiotics becomes necessary, it is important to finish the course and replace intestinal flora with species like *Acidophilus* and *Bifidus* during and after. **Your local Naturopathic Doctor can often keep you from having to resort to antibiotics in the first place, or help you restore your immune system after you've been on antibiotics.**

Diet is your best defense

- Colorful vegetables. *High bioflavonoid, mineral and vitamin content, and low sugar.*
- Whole grains. *More complex carbohydrates, less simple carbs.*
- Protein. *Especially chicken and turkey (fowl), tofu and soy-based protein, fish and seeds. Minimize red meat.*
- Liquids. *Very important to hydrate cells which helps enzyme and energy reactions, and flush the body of toxins.*
- Garlic. *The best broad-spectrum antibiotic, antiviral and anti-parasitic around: contains allicin.*
- Onion. *Same "Allium" genus as garlic, similar sulphur-containing antimicrobial compounds.*
- Ginger. *Warms, promotes increased circulation and sweating.*
- Mushrooms. *Full of enzymes and compounds that boost immunity, especially Shitake, Maitake, and Reishi.*
- Good bacteria. *Acidophilus & Bifidus species are shown to reduce cold & flu incidence + duration. Non-dairy probiotic foods include miso, sourkraut and it's Asian cousin kim-chi. A probiotic supplement should have 10 billion CFU or more per serving.*

"Soup diet" for 1-3 days, often does better than a handful of supplements.

Immune-supporting Chicken Soup	Creamed Butternut Squash Soup
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Sauté' large chopped onion, 6-8 cloves of minced garlic, ½ cup fresh shitake mushrooms, and 2 cups cubed organic chicken (or 2 packages cubed firm tofu) in Olive oil.◦ Chop one head of kale into "noodle-size" strips. Add 1½ quarts of water and the kale, and bring to a brief boil.◦ In a blender, put 2 Tbsp. Fresh chopped ginger, ½ cup miso, (or wine or vinegar), 2 Tbsp. Chicken or vegetable boullion, and puree with some of the soup water. Salt and pepper (basil, oregano) to taste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Sauté' large chopped onion, 6-8 cloves of minced garlic, and one package of firm tofu in Olive oil.◦ Boil or bake 2 medium butternut squash until soft, and remove the skin and seeds.◦ In a blender or food processor, put 2 Tbsp. Fresh chopped ginger, ½ cup miso (or white wine or vinegar) chunks of cooked squash, and the sautéed onion/garlic, adding water to make the right creamy consistency. Stir in chopped Rosemary, salt and pepper to taste, and sprinkle with nutmeg.

Decrease or avoid:

- Sugar, Alcohol, Gluten-rich fluffy foods, Coffee and Soda. *These all acidify the body and encourage bacterial growth.*
- Orange Juice, Dairy (Milk, Cheese), Bananas. *These cause increased mucous production in sinuses & inner ear.*

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Rest

Get 8 hours of restful sleep per night. *Especially important if the cold has gone "below the neck".*

Better yet, take a warm bath tonight with 2-4 cups of Epsom salts dissolved in it, and some lavender essential oil to unwind.

De-stress

Chronic stress directly reduces your immune system through pathways that include effects of cortisol, and "adrenaline" (epinephrine, norepinephrine). *Mindfulness of breathing can reduce stress greatly.*

Wash your hands

Remember that viruses are spread by respiratory droplets. Wash your hands especially after touching public handrails, counters, money... and especially the bathroom.

Prevent stagnation

In Chinese Medicine, cold causes stagnation, and stagnation brings on a "cold".

Drink plenty of fluids - warm being best in winter to conserve your body's energy, and move fluids. Brothy soup, herbal tea, and plain water are best.

Moderate exercise, 20 minutes a day, 3-4 times a week at least. Aerobic, cardiovascular and weight-bearing exercises are best. *Exercise helps a cold "above the neck".*

End showers on cool or cold. You don't have to join the polar bear club, just stimulate circulation.

Hot footsoaks with Epsom salt, alternating with cold (3 minutes & 30 seconds). End on cold. Try "warming sock" therapy during the night. These draw congestion out of the head and sinuses.

Nutrients against cold & flu

Vitamin C. *Shown to be antiviral & mucolytic at doses of 2,000mg every 2 hours, or a few times a day.*

Zinc. *15mg once/twice per day has been shown to reduce duration and intensity of colds and flu.*

Vitamin D. *Shown to balance the immune system (prevents colds & autoimmune processes) at 4 (RDA) to 8,000 IU per day.*

Herbs against cold & flu

Echinacea. *Immune system enhancer. Two week limit was an old mistake in translation of a study.*

Goldenseal. *Well-known antibacterial and antiviral.*

Elderberry. *Raises your immune system and body temperature. Good source of Vitamin C.*

Oregon Grape Root. *Local Goldenseal. Less well-known antibacterial and antiviral.*

Astragalus. *Chinese immune enhancer, strengthens your "outer defenses".*

Usnea Lichen. *Antiviral.*

Western Red Cedar. *Antiviral.*

Osha Root. *Antibacterial and antiviral, specific to the throat, Best taken as a liquid for sore throats.*

Yarrow flowers. *Helps body deal with fevers, lowers blood pressure, heals wounds.*

Cayenne. *Warms, and increases circulation.*

Lomatium. *Strong antiviral. Excess use will warn with a rash.*

Olive Leaf Extract. *Increasing body of research showing effectiveness against virus.*

Licorice root. *Antiviral, and great "does everything" herb. Caution if the person has high blood pressure.*

Homeopathy

Oscillococcinum. *Combination homeopathic, very effective at treating flu symptoms.*

Gelsemium, Rhus tox, Nux vomica, Bryonia, Eupatorium perf, Arsenicum, Mercurius, Pyrogen, Pulsatilla, Allium cepa, Arsenicum, Natrum mur, Kali bic, Rumex, Belladonna, Ferrum phos. *For cold or flu symptoms, individual to the specific complaints.*

Different people have different favorite combinations of herbs and nutrients that they swear by. At the Backcountry Herbal Apothecary, we put together a tincture of herbs that has just about every herb listed above, and we call it the "**Killer Blend**". It tastes nasty & spicy, but it kills all manner of microbes while boosting immunity. Whatever blend you choose, start with the basics – soup.