



This cold and flu season instead of reaching for the pharmaceuticals, try some natural remedies and practices to not only prevent the outbreak, but manage the symptoms once it has set in.

Some natural help for immunity and managing cold's and flu this winter are good nutrition, aromatherapy and ancient spices.

1) Diet + Food

Eliminate refined sugar from the diet. Refined sugar interferes with absorption of vitamins and minerals, makes pH more acidic, and changes the way white blood cells respond to invaders, sabotaging immunity. Eliminating sugar from the diet is the single best thing that anyone can do for their immune health – and the results are usually apparent in a matter of days or weeks.

Lemon is the most important among the many home remedies for common cold. It is beneficial in all types of cold with fever. Vitamin C-rich lemon juice increases body resistance, decreases toxicity and reduces the duration of the illness. One lemon diluted in a glass of warm water, with a teaspoon of honey added to it. This should be taken once or twice daily. Add lemon to salad dressings and food preparation.

A tablespoon (or less) Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) can be taken first thing in the morning, in a glass of water, or used as part of a salad dressing or sauce in a meal.

Studies have begun to reinforce the long-held belief that a large portion of the body's immune response resides in the gut. Probiotics are the healthy bacteria that improve digestion and waste elimination in the body, as well as acting as a natural immune booster. These friendly bacteria, like acidophilus and bifidus, fight infection, lowering the incidence of colds, flu, gas, bloating, and yeast infections. Choose an organic natural yoghurt without any added sugar.

Garlic soup is an old remedy to reduce the severity of a cold, and should be taken once daily. The soup can be prepared by boiling three or four cloves of chopped garlic in a cup of water. Garlic contains antiseptic and antispasmodic properties, besides several other medicinal virtues. The oil contained in this vegetable helps to open up the respiratory passages. In soup form, it flushes out all toxins from the system and thus helps bring down fever. Five drops of garlic oil combined with a teaspoon of onion juice, and diluted in a cup of water, can be drunk two to three times a day.

Ginger tea, prepared by adding a few pieces of ginger into boiled water before adding tea leaves, is also an effective remedy for colds and for fevers resulting from cold. It may be taken twice daily.

Increase intake of raw organic fruit and veggies. Enzymes are an important part of digestive health, and are also used in every other part of the body to break down toxins, for cellular metabolism, and to fight disease – an ideal immune booster.

2) Aromatherapy is derived from the ancient practice of using essential oils made from the pure essences of plants, flowers, fruits, bark and roots for psychological and physical wellbeing. It is a natural, non-invasive treatment which works to assist the body in healing itself rather than merely masking the symptoms. Start using aromatics as soon as you start feeling run-down. Experts say that there is a very narrow window during which you can head off a cold before it starts.

Exotic essences such as ravenensare and niaouli are known for their natural anti-infectious and antiviral properties. Because these oils have strong, slightly medicinal smells, blend them with a sweeter-smelling oil such as rosewood, lemon, eucalyptus, pine or fir, all of which have an antiseptic effect.

Herbal steam can reduce congestion, and if the vapour temperature is 110°F or higher, it will also kill cold germs on contact.

Use inhalations of chamomile, eucalyptus or thyme to help loosen mucus and heal the throat, nasal passages and bronchial tubes. Horsetail inhalations reduce swelling of mucous membranes. Onion or nasturtium inhalations disinfect. Ginkgo biloba leaf inhalations kill bacteria and heal the cells of the damaged mucous membranes almost immediately.

To help alleviate and disinfect dry air passages, add 10 drops of tea tree oil to a bowl of hot water or vaporizer and leave in bedroom overnight. A small handkerchief sprinkled with a few drops of the oil and left under the pillow may help as well.

Place fresh leaves of eucalyptus globulus (*E. globulus*), wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*), or peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) in a bowl. Pour in boiling water. Place a towel over your head, lean over the bowl to create a steam tent, and breathe the vapours.

Mix a few drops of Eucalyptus globulus (Do not use this for small children), ravensar (*Ravensara aromatica*), spike lavender (*Lavendula latifolia*) or tea tree oil (*Melaleuca alternifolia*). Inhale from a tissue during the day.

Add four drops of any of these oils to two teaspoons of carrier oil or one teaspoonful of gel base. Use this for a chest/back rub in the morning and evening.

Add few drops of lavender or tea tree oil to a bath.

Inhale steam for fifteen minutes three times daily in acute stage; when the condition is improving.

Inhale steam in the evening before retiring for a week or so to help heat the bronchial passages.

Several oils have considerable anti-viral activity, and help to boost the immune system. For maximum effectiveness, it is important that you use them at the earliest sign of influenza or in some cases before contracting cold/flu to boost your immune system as a preventative.

Essential oils of basil, eucalyptus, peppermint, and pine help to ease nasal congestion. Choose one to three of these oils and use them as inhalants or in steam inhalation treatments.

For chest congestion, a steam inhalation treatment made with basil, pine, and/ or tea tree oil can help to clear mucus and ease breathing. Rubbing a massage oil prepared with these oils over the chest may also be helpful.

An aromatherapy bath prepared with elemi, myrrh, pine, and/ or tea tree oil can help to soothe achy feeling all over your body that accompanies flu. Use a lukewarm bath for fever, a hot bath for chills.

Protect yourself from others by gargling daily with 1 drop each of the essential oils of tea tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) and lemon in a glass of warm water; stir well before each mouthful. Do not swallow.

Sneezing: Steam inhalation of mixture of cypress and neroli.

Headache: Rub lavender and peppermint into the temples.

The shivers/fever: Run a warm bath and place rosemary, black pepper and ginger in the water.

Sinus: Steam inhalation of eucalyptus or peppermint.

To boost your immune system: You can add to a bath or oil burner tea tree, eucalyptus, basil, rosemary, thyme, frankincense or lemon.

Cough: Create your own chest rub to calm a cough out of cedarwood, clary sage, cypress and eucalyptus.

Caution: Essential oils are very concentrated and should not be placed too near a baby's head, as prolonged inhalation can cause an enlarged liver.

[Read more](#) (external link)

Ancient Spices

Spices have amazing medicinal properties as well as the ability to improve the flavour of your fave dish. The best way to ensure your spices don't contain fillers (like sugar), (synthetic anti-caking agents, artificial colours, flavours and preservatives is to choose certified organic. Some conventional spices may be fumigated with hazardous chemicals, use genetically modified ingredients and some are even irradiated, creating carcinogenic by-products to reside in the spices. Most organic spices are sterilised using steam.

Organic Cayenne Pepper

Cayenne pepper is native to Central and South America is arguably the most powerful spice. Its bright red colour indicates that it is rich in beta-carotene and Pro vitamin A, which is also known as the anti-infection vitamin. It has the ability to clear mucous from the lungs and nasal passages, boost immunity and is a potent antioxidant.

In addition to helping prevent colds cayenne pepper is beneficial for your heart, digestive system, circulatory system, a good source of fibre, reduces blood cholesterol and contrary to popular belief about spices, helps prevent stomach ulcers.

Add organic cayenne pepper powder to a cup of hot organic cocoa.

Spice up your avocado by filling it with chopped tomato, cucumber, garlic, lemon juice and a pinch of cayenne pepper.

Organic Turmeric

Traditionally called Indian Saffron and harvested for more than 5000 years, turmeric is native to Southern India and Indonesia. The warm but bitter spice boosts activity in the immune system and is high in anti-oxidants, which can neutralise free radicals. Turmeric's healing benefits are attributed to curcumin, the compound responsible for the herb's yellow pigment. Practitioners of Ayurveda, a traditional Indian medical system, believe the herb can cleanse and heal the entire body when taken internally.

Combine grated organic fresh turmeric, ginger, maple syrup and lemon to infuse a healthy tasty tea.

Drink 2-3 cups of turmeric tea per day, as necessary. Although turmeric is safe to consume, it should be taken in moderation, as with any herbal remedy. Women who are pregnant or nursing and sufferers of congestive heart failure, gallstones, or obstruction of the bile ducts should not take turmeric tea.

Add organic powdered turmeric to any lentil recipes.

A delicious soup can be made from combining grated ginger, crushed garlic, ground turmeric, egg, water, salt and a little olive oil.

Organic Cinnamon

Cinnamon is a warm yet sweet spice that comes from the brown bark of the Cinnamon tree.

To make an effective French folk remedy for colds and flues, combine 2 cups of water, a small stick of cinnamon and a few cloves together in a saucepan and bring to a slow boil for about 3 minutes. Remove and add 2 tsp. lemon juice, 1-1/2 tbsp. dark honey or black strap molasses, and 2 tbsp. good quality whiskey. Stir well, cover, and let steep for 20 minutes or so.

Drink 1/2 cup at a time every 3-4 hours. It's pleasant tasting and really breaks up the fever and congestion accompanying either the common cold or influenza.

Potent Supplements

We are all guilty of not eating a perfect diet. Due to busy and stressful lifestyles we often skip meals or go for the quick sugar fix to get us through the day. To help prevent or manage a cold or flu it is great to add some key supplements in your diet for winter months.

Olive Leaf Extract

The first formal medical mention of the olive leaf - an account describing its ability to cure severe cases of fever and malaria -- occurred about 150 years ago. In 1854, the Pharmaceutical Journal carried a report by one Daniel Hanbury and contained the following simple healing recipe:

Boil a handful of leaves in a quart of water down to half its original volume. Then administer the liquid in the amount of a wineglass every 3 or 4 hours until the fever is cured.

The olive leaf extract is said to be forty times more potent than the antioxidants found in olive oil, five times more powerful than Vitamin C.

Echinacea

Researchers from the University of Connecticut school of pharmacy did a review of studies of people with colds who took echinacea, either alone or in combinations with other supplements like vitamin C, thyme, peppermint, eucalyptus and spearmint.

These were studies where healthy volunteers were exposed to colds and given echinacea and compared to matched groups with colds who didn't take the herb (placebo groups). There were 1356 study participants across 14 studies in all.

The researchers calculated that taking echinacea lowered the chance of getting a cold by 58 per cent and it shortened the duration of a cold by 1.4 days.

In one study of people taking echinacea in combination with Vitamin C, the combination appeared to reduce the chances of getting a cold by a whopping 86 per cent.

[Source](#) (external link)

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