

## "Alternative" Remedies for the Common Cold

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What is the Common Cold anyway? The Merck Manual describes the common cold as an acute viral infection of the respiratory tract, with inflammation in any or all airways, including the nose, sinuses, throat, larynx, and often the trachea and bronchi. Fever and more severe symptoms (aches and pains, chills, etc.) are usually characteristic of "the flu".

Why doesn't Western medicine have the answer? Western medicine has little success in the treatment of the common cold, primarily due to the nature of how western medicine approaches illness. Western medicine tries to kill germs after they have invaded, but **antibiotics kill bacteria, they do not kill viruses.** Traditional medicines (Complementary) focus on helping the body to remain in (or return to) balance with respect to the outside world. Once in balance within oneself and in relation to the outside world, catching a cold or flu is far less likely. We are exposed to viruses all the time, and those who are unbalanced (i.e., highly stressed, overly-fatigued, have allergies, etc) are most likely to develop symptoms. Traditional medicines help us to stay well, feel better, and recover quickly from a cold or flu.

### What can I do once I catch a cold?

- 1) **Rest** (most healing occurs during sleep);
- 2) **Eat less** (this enhances immune response);
- 3) **Drink extra fluids**, to thin congestion and flush out toxins (esp. water and herb tea, but not dairy);
- 4) **Don't suppress symptoms** unless symptoms are causing your body added strain (i.e., missed sleep due to coughing). They are the body's way of fighting the illness [i.e., cough expectorates germs, fever kills germs (Note: Fevers over 104°F are dangerous...consult a physician)];
- 5) **Don't use, or sparingly use, over-the-counter medications.** Some, like aspirin and acetaminophen, suppress immune function, others (like antihistamines) simply prolong the duration of the illness by suppressing symptoms;
- 6) **Increase Vitamin C intake** to 1,000-5,000 mg. per day;
- 7) **Prepare a facial steam bath...**Simply add a few drops of an essential oil to a bowl of steaming water, place a towel over your head to direct the steam into your face. The following essential oils are all excellent virus fighters:

Eucalyptus (also breaks up mucus), Peppermint (also is an expectorant and dilates bronchioles), Rose Geranium (great for sore throats), Lavender, Lemon, Sage, and Licorice);

8) **Drink Herb Tea...**Add 1/2 teaspoon of: Echinacea root, Peppermint leaves, Hyssop leaves, Elder flowers, and Schizandra berries in 1 quart of boiling water (steep for at least 20 minutes, preferably over night);

9) **Eat Bioflavanoid-rich foods** such as cabbage, green peppers, parsley, carrots, broccoli, turnips, kuzu, parsnips, horseradish, scallions, garlic, lemons, grapefruit, most other fruits;

10) **Avoid mucus producing foods...**Such as dairy products, eggs, refined sugars, meats, and chemicals;

11) **Prepare Fresh Ginger and Lemon Rind Tea with Honey** (great for sore throats);

12) **Gargle with Salt water** (kills germs in the mouth and throat);

13) **Use a Neti Pot with a mild salt water solution** (excellent for infection in the sinuses (sinusitis));

14) **Induce sweating...** Sweating helps remove toxins [do not use sweating therapy with a high fever or if you are very dry (dry mouth, minimal urination, etc.)]. Always drink extra water when sweating;

15) **Apply hot packs** on the congested area (nose, sinuses, throat, chest, etc.) to bring warmth and additional circulation aiding in healing. After the pack is cooled remove and reheat (continue every 15 minutes or so until relief is felt). Repeat as needed.

### What can I do to prevent catching a cold?

1) **Reduce physical stress** (when your body is physically depleted your immune system is weakened);

2) **Reduce mental and emotional stress** (mental and emotional stress also weaken the immune system);

3) **Rest** according to Chinese Medicine the Autumn and Winter are Yin times when the body should be more at rest;

4) **Stay hydrated;**

5) **Use Immune Boosting Herbs...**Echinacea (stimulates macrophage production), Astragalus (increases interferon production), Licorice (good for Candida; increases interferon production), Siberian Ginseng, Shizandra berries, Elder berries, Pau D'arco, and Bupleurum. An effective tincture combination is

equal parts of Echinacea, Pau D'arco, Siberian Ginseng, Licorice, Astragalus, and Bupleurum;

6) **Use Anti-viral foods...**Garlic [uncooked (try to chew, but be aware of the heat, and keep water nearby)...unfortunately not only will your germs leave, but so may your friends], Shiitake mushrooms, Thyme, Lemon, Rosemary, Black Pepper, Ginger, and Cardamom; and lastly,

7) **Increase hand washing during cold and flu season.**