

Colds, Coughs and Flu – Natural Methods to Prepare, Prevent and Cure

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http://www.wrightnewsletter.com/articles/nah_2001g5zd/nah_200104.html

April 2001 Newsletter excerpt

Preventing colds, flu, and infection: Plan ahead to fight off germs for this fall's season of sickness! by Jonathan V. Wright, M.D.

Sugar-It has to go

Just the thought of never eating sugar might make you feel as if you have the flu. It's a daunting thought to say the least. But it's absolutely essential. You're probably thinking, "Sugar...what does that have to do with catching or resisting infection? Certainly an occasional soda, cookie, or glass of fruit juice can't hurt that much!" But it certainly can!

Researchers have found that sugar, even just 1 teaspoon, impairs your immune system by 50 percent for up to a few hours after consumption. And if you eat a little bit of sugar now and then throughout the day, your immune system will be impaired by 50 percent ALL DAY LONG! So if a friend with a cold pays a visit within a few hours after you've had a sugary snack, you're much more likely to pick up the illness. And, although it can take months, switching over to a no-sugar diet is absolutely essential.

It's obvious to me from my practice that for many people eliminating sugar is an almost painful process. Very few are able to quit cold turkey, and most of us need to gradually cut down...to zero. And yes, zero sugar is necessary. That's why I'm urging you to start now and get it done by fall! Remember, as little as 1 teaspoonful can cut your body's germ-fighting capabilities for up to four to five hours!

First, toss out the sugar in your home. Take all the bags of sucking candies and chocolate-chip cookies, fruit juices and vanilla yogurts, the maple syrup and strawberry jam...and throw them away! Make sure to read all labels, and eliminate anything that ends in "-ose": sucrose, fructose, glucose, and so on. "Corn syrup," "high-fructose corn syrup," "maltodextrin," and a few others are all just sugars in disguise.

Beware those "healthy" fruit juices!

In the study above, the researchers found that even orange juice (one of the "best" juices) interfered with the body's ability to fight germs. Unfortunately, most commercial fruit juices (even the "no sugar added" ones) are nothing but naturally fruit-flavored sugar solutions. So if you have to have your morning OJ, you'll have to juice your own and use the whole fruit-including the fiber. Whole fruit juices don't cause nearly as much of a sugar problem.

Now, go to the store and stock up on some snacks that do not have any refined sugar. Remember, the test showed that starches didn't have the same bad effect on the immune system. You'll find many crackers, pretzels, and other sugar-free munchies that will be good substitutes. Raw vegetables and fruits are also safe. Try to stick with foods that are whole-grain, low in fat, and high in nutrients. Just because you're giving your immune system a boost doesn't mean you can ignore your blood pressure, cholesterol, or weight!

Please don't substitute non-food, chemical-laden diet drinks for sugary drinks or artificial sweeteners for sugar. These chemicals may or may not increase our odds of getting infections, but they can cause their own problems. If you're having trouble weaning yourself off of the sweet stuff, try an herbal sweetener. Stevia and Lo Han Kuo are two intensely sweet (but quite different tasting) liquid herbal concentrates that can be added to coffee, tea, or other drinks. For most of us, a drop or two per cup will be plenty. Neither increases our chances of infection as sugar does; in fact, both have positive health benefits. Stevia is also available as a powder and in other forms for cooking, baking, and other food uses.

Liquid Stevia is available as a dark liquid with a stronger taste (and an aftertaste) and in a clear form, which is just as sweet (but with little aftertaste). [This product is also available in very small, leak-proof, squeeze-bottle containers, ideal for traveling.] Lo Han Kuo (Herba Swee) is presently available only in liquid form. They are available in nearly all natural-food stores and at the Tahoma Clinic Dispensary; tel. (888)893-6878, website: www.tahoma-clinic.com.

One step at a time is OK

It's really all about choice when it comes to giving up sugar. If you choose to buy foods that don't contain it and eat snacks that don't contain it, you shouldn't have a problem. Try to conquer one meal or one

snack at a time. Start tomorrow and make your breakfast sugar-free. Next week, replace your afternoon snack. The following week, cut out dessert after dinner. Keep this up. You'll realize that it's not impossible. It's also a good feeling to know that with each sugary meal or snack you eliminate, you're automatically boosting your immune system...at least for the next few hours. And, next winter, when you're free from colds and flu, you'll see that good health is the sweetest treat of all!

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Cough Remedies by Jonathan V. Wright, M.D.

When the typically drug-friendly FDA recommended last October that parents stop giving children over-the-counter cough and cold medications, everyone took notice -- and the search for safe alternatives began. The good news is that they didn't have far to look.

As we've talked about several times over the past few months, there are a number of natural cold and flu preventatives and remedies to choose from that don't carry the risks associated with patented cold medicines (for a complete rundown, refer back to the October 2007 issue of Nutrition & Healing, which subscribers can download for free by logging on to the archives portion of the website with the username and password listed on page 8 of your most recent issue). And the same holds true for cough remedies: There are lots of natural options to choose from, but one of the most effective is also one of the simplest -- honey.

It's not often that the medical mainstream admits that a natural remedy works better than one of its patented cash cows, but recent research done at Penn State College of Medicine found that honey actually did a better job at alleviating coughs in children than dextromethorphan (DM), one of the cough-suppressing drugs the FDA warned against back in October.

The study involved 105 children between the ages of 2 and 18 who were suffering from coughs that were especially bad during the night. The children were divided into three groups, one that received honey, one that received honey-flavored DM, and one that received no treatment. Parents of the children were instructed to rate both frequency and severity of the children's coughs as well as the children's and their own quality of sleep both one day before and the day of treatment.

Based on the parents' ratings, the children who were given honey had two points more improvement than the children taking DM -- 10.71 points compared to 8.39 points.

And even though this study was conducted on children, there's no reason to believe that honey wouldn't offer similar results for adults. You can find natural honey in any health food store or places like Whole Foods Market and Trader Joe's. The study didn't list a particular dosage, but did say that it only took a "small amount" to offer significant relief. Check with your doctor to determine the best dose for you or your children or grandchildren.

Of course, if diabetes or blood sugar levels are a concern, Dr. Wright has also talked about another highly effective natural cough remedy called Mucolytic Drainage Remedy numerous times over the years. He's even seen this formula work on cases of whooping cough. According to Dr. Wright, just 1 teaspoonful (sometimes less for small children) every three to four hours as needed helps quiet a cough better than anything he's seen. Mucolytic Drainage Remedy is available through some natural food stores and compounding pharmacies, as well as through the Tahoma Clinic Dispensary.

Sources:

"Honey proves a better option for childhood cough than OTCs," Penn State Live (www.live.psu.edu), 12/5/07

www.quantumhealth.com

Cold or Flu – Which Do You Have?

Diagnosis. Prevention. Treatment

Viruses cause both cold and flu. If a cold is incorrectly identified as flu, it's no disaster. A cold may sometimes lead to sinus or middle ear infections and these can be treated. But if the flu is wrongly identified as a bad cold, possible life-threatening flu problems like pneumonia may go unobserved.

Cold or flu? Here's how to tell.

Symptom	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	102 to 104 degrees for 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General aches and pains	Minor	Usual, often bad
Tired and weak	Very mild	Can last 2-3 weeks
Exhausted	Never	Early and prominent
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Cough, congestion	Mild or moderate, hacking Sinus congestions or earache – very treatable.	Common, can get worse Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life threatening
Dangers	Zinc lozenges, herbs like elderberry and echinacea, OTC remedies to relieve symptoms.	Immune supporting herbs, elderberry, echinacea, golden seal, anti-viral medicines prescriptions
Treatments	Avoid contact. Zinc lozenges at first sign. Immune supporting herbs.	Avoid contact. Flu shot. Elderberry, Echinacea, and other immune support herbs.
Prevention		

Americans get about 1 billion colds each year. Colds are passed on in two ways; by inhaling the cold virus from someone who has it, or by touching respiratory secretions (sneeze stuff for example) through hand to hand contact or a surface like a doorknob, and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Washing your hands often when you are around those with colds is a highly effective way to stay well.

Flu can affect 20 to 50 percent of the population each year. It's very contagious and is mostly spread by direct person-to-person contact. A flu virus can linger in the air for three hours and in close quarters, like classrooms or work spaces, transmission is high.

Colds and flu strike most people in the fall and winter, but not because it's colder outside. Researchers at NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases believe that the cold weather makes us spend more time indoors, increasing the opportunity for the flu to spread. Also, the lower humidity during the colder months helps cold-causing viruses to thrive and may dry the lining of the nasal passages, making them more susceptible to infection.

Children get the most colds--six or eight a year. By contrast, adults average two to four a year, with a greater frequency in the parents of children. Adults over 60 usually suffer less than one cold a year, probably because they have built up a natural immunity.

What Not to Do

Strep Throat: See a doctor if you were exposed to strep or have any of these symptoms: fever, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, swollen neck glands, difficulty breathing or swallowing, tonsils with pus, or severe pain that doesn't improve in a few days.

Antibiotics: Don't bother taking antibiotics to treat your flu or cold; antibiotics do not kill viruses, and they should be used only for bacterial complications. Overuse of antibiotics has become a very serious problem, leading to a resistance in disease-causing bacteria that may render antibiotics ineffective for certain conditions.

The Neck Up/Neck Down Rule

You've got a slight cough, your throat is sore, your nose is running and you feel just the tiniest muscle ache. Should you work out? Will you recover faster if you do?

Many people believe that exercising will actually boost their immune system and help them recover more quickly. But most doctors disagree. Evidence is strong that if you are feeling fatigued, feverish or really stuffy, working out will probably make you feel worse.

According to some physicians, there is a fairly simple way to decide if you should take it easy or not and it's called the neck up - neck down rule: If your symptoms are from the neck up, meaning you have sniffles, a runny nose, headache and perhaps a very mild cough, it's probably OK to perform a mild workout. The key is to make sure you have no difficulty breathing during or after a workout. Definitely cut back, though, especially if you're a type A at the gym. Experts agree that going at one third your normal pace might be the best way to proceed and if you feel worse a few hours later – give yourself a few days rest.

If you're symptoms are primarily neck down, that is you've got a deep chest cough or a fever, you should skip working out altogether until you feel much better. Chest pain means you most likely have inflamed tissue in the lungs and working out will cause an even worse inflammation. Sleep and rest are the better choice. Fitness professionals note that many people think they feel better after a workout, but agree that it's the endorphins kicking in. Chances are these same folks will feel worse a few hours later. The body knows what's best for you – it's a matter of listening closely. Professional athletes know that skipping working out until they've recovered from illness has no adverse affect - the body will quickly renew itself once they get back on their program. Finally, gym professionals note that their patrons will appreciate it if you stay away until you absolutely know you are not contagious.

www.zooscape.com

Many people make little distinction between the terms 'cold' and 'flu'. While both the common cold and influenza are viral in nature, they are not terms that should be used interchangeably. Colds generally involve symptoms that include a runny nose, a sore throat, and coughing, but they seldom involve a headache or a fever. A cold will typically last only about a week and symptoms are usually much less severe than those associated with the flu. For those of you looking for a quick and easy definition of influenza, or the 'flu' as it is commonly called, it is essentially an acute viral infection of the upper respiratory tract or digestive tract. It is often accompanied by fever, chills, sore throat, nausea, diarrhea, abdominal pain and lethargy (excessive fatigue).

There are many herbal products that permit your body to function naturally during bouts of the flu and also allow you to function optimally while relieving the acute symptoms. In addition to the herbs that are outlined in this newsletter, experts do recommend that you take the following proactive measures to help cut down on your risk of acquiring a cold or the flu:

- * Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, using warm water and soap all over your hands and fingers. Washing your hands should take a minimum of 15 seconds.
- * Avoid putting your hands near your eyes, nose or mouth as most germs enter through these areas.
- * Strengthen your immune system with balanced meals, plenty of sleep and natural health supplements.
- * Make sure you drink at least 8 glasses of water a day since even if you don't feel thirsty, your body can still become dehydrated and make you more prone to infection.
- * Exercise regularly! Regular and consistent exercise not only helps you look better and gives you more energy, but it also strengthens your body from the inside out, making you a less likely target for all the germs and bacteria that are floating around.

When thinking of herbal products for the treatment of cold and/or flu symptoms, the number one suggestion is always echinacea. Research has shown that echinacea possesses strong immune-stimulating activity to help prevent and treat infections of all kinds. This herb is especially useful for colds, flu, urinary tract infections and skin irritations, such as boils. In times of stress, in harsh environments or seasons, whenever the body is in need of reinforcement, Echinacea may supply the

boost required to maintain the lines of resistance, to mend injured tissue, and to stimulate healthy body functioning.

In addition to echinacea's ability to reinforce the immune system, it also has been shown to heal wounds, ease inflammation, kill bacteria, detoxify and relieve allergic symptoms. As the most important immune stimulant, echinacea is not only used to fight both viral and bacterial infections such as bronchitis and throat infection, but it has also been shown to be particularly helpful for chronic infections, such as post-viral fatigue syndrome, which is the tired feeling you get when overcoming a cold or the flu.

Goldenseal is another excellent suggestion for helping to combat colds and flu, and is most often combined with echinacea in herbal preparations for this specific reason. The rhizomes of goldenseal are harvested for use medicinally and are used to reduce inflammation, kill bacteria in the upper respiratory and urinary tracts, and also to treat bacterial infections of the digestive tract, such as dysentery.

Goldenseal is a potent remedy for disorders of the mucus membranes and can be taken to alleviate sore throats, sinus infections, ear infections, congestion and sore inflamed eyes. Additionally, goldenseal has been shown to help invigorate the body, ease constipation, stimulate the uterus and, when used as a mouthwash, counters infection and aids in healing infected gums, mouth ulcers and sore throats.

Thyme is used in many herbal preparations that are targeted to treat colds and the flu. Consider thyme to help you eliminate cold and flu symptoms such as a sore throat, coughing or mucus congestion. Thyme makes an effective remedy for chest infections, such as bronchitis, pneumonia, whooping cough and pleurisy.

Thyme has long been used as an antiseptic, a tonic, and to relieve muscle spasms and act as an expectorant. In addition to helping you overcome colds and flu symptoms, thyme has also been used to help treat asthma, particularly in children. Its invigorating qualities are also helpful in relieving the symptoms of hay fever.

Runny nose: ginger or usnea (dry mucus, antiseptic)

To thin out mucus: Vaporizer or humidifier – add essential oils (a few drops of lavender, or eucalyptus, or peppermint) and breathe in with towel around head for a few minutes. As it disperses in the room it can also kill germs.

For dry, sore throat: elderberry, zinc, vitamin C, Echinacea (some combination of these) in lozenges to suck on throughout the day. For a few days, you may consume a little over 100 mg of zinc. After that, decrease the dose. Be sure to take around 2 mg of copper daily (either through a multivitamin or a mineral supplement). For moistening the throat and esophagus (as well as the stomach lining), slippery elm, marshmallow root and deglycyrrhated licorice root extract (DGLE) often soothe and heal.

For sinuses: Xylitol Nasal Spray is essential (Now Foods makes one of the best, adding tea tree oil, grapefruit seed extract and other ingredients.) The xylitol sugar keeps the viruses, bacteria and fungi from sticking to the sinus wall, and helps flush out the allergic airborne allergens (pollens, dust etc.) that often start a vicious cycle of sinus congestion, drainage and similar problems. In especially severe cases, you can add a quality, true colloidal silver (not the home-made electrolytic silver water), Echinacea tincture, goldenseal tincture, and a teaspoon or two of DMSO to the nasal spray – this will absorb into the tissues better and increase the elimination of viruses, bacteria and fungi.

www.bottomlinecrets.com **Ronald Eccles, PhD, director, Common Cold Centre in London and Healthcare Clinical Trials, Cardiff University, Cardiff, Wales.**

Researchers asked 90 volunteers to place their bare feet in cold (50° F) water for 20 minutes, while 90 others kept their feet in an empty bowl. Thirteen people from the chilled group developed a cold within five days, compared with five people from the other group. *Theory:* Chilling the body constricts blood vessels in the nose, reducing the supply of infection-fighting white blood cells to the

nasal passages. This sets the stage for cold viruses to multiply and trigger cold symptoms. *Self-defense:* Wear waterproof, insulated footwear during the winter to keep your feet warm and dry.

www.kidshealth.org

In many cases, nonmedicinal treatments may be your child's best bet for a quick recovery, especially with mild cases of the [flu](#) or the [common cold](#). Resting (preferably in bed) can help the body fight a virus, and plenty of clear fluids such as water, juice, and broth will help your child avoid dehydration from body fluids lost through vomiting, diarrhea, perspiration, and nasal secretions.

If your child suffers from congestion and a stuffy nose, saline drops can thin nasal secretions. A cool-mist humidifier or a warm-air vaporizer keeps moisture in the air, helping to loosen your child's congestion. If you use a humidifier or vaporizer, though, be sure to clean it thoroughly every day because bacteria and mold can develop if it isn't kept clean and dry.

Never give aspirin to children younger than 12, and all children and teens under age 19 should avoid aspirin during viral illnesses. Using aspirin during an illness caused by a virus (such as the flu, [chicken pox](#), or an upper respiratory infection) can cause [Reye syndrome](#), a potentially life-threatening disease with symptoms such as an enlarged liver, nausea, and extreme fatigue. Because some over-the-counter medicines (such as some headache and antinausea medicines) contain aspirin, you should always read labels and check with your child's doctor before using OTC medicines. Also, be on the lookout for labels - some aspirin-containing medications have labels that use words other than aspirin (such as salicylate or acetylsalicylate), so avoid those medications, too.

www.vitasearch.com de Vrese M, Winkler P, et al, *Vaccine*, 2006 Jun 6

In a double blind, randomized, controlled intervention study involving 479 healthy adults, long-term intake of the probiotic bacteria, lactobacilli and bifidobacteria significantly shortened the duration and severity of common cold episodes. The duration of common cold episodes was shorter by almost 2 days compared to that in the control group (7 versus 8.9 days). Additionally, reduced severity of symptoms during common cold episodes were observed in the probiotic group compared to the control group. Probiotic intake also led to larger increases in cytotoxic T plus T suppressor cell counts and in T helper cell counts.

www.BottomLineSecrets.com

The Wilen Sisters' Home Remedies that Work Better than Drugs Lydia Wilen Joan Wilen

The Wilen sisters have been using home remedies all their lives, and for the last quarter century, they've been researching and writing about them as well.

Bottom Line/Personal asked the Wilens to share the remedies they use most often for a variety of health challenges. The sisters may not always be able to explain why the remedies work -- but they work. All use ingredients readily available in most kitchens, supermarkets or health-food stores. Of course, always check with your doctor before taking any dietary supplement or herb.

SORE THROAT

At the first sign of a sore or scratchy throat, mix two teaspoons of apple cider vinegar in six to eight ounces of warm water. Take a mouthful, gargle with it and spit it out -- then swallow a mouthful. Repeat the gargle/swallow pattern until there's nothing left in the glass. Do this every hour until your throat is better. We usually feel better within two or three hours.

COLDS

We eat chicken soup when we feel a cold coming on. Aside from it being a comfort food, it helps prevent a cold from becoming full-blown and/or it shortens the duration of one. We either prepare the soup from scratch, adding lots of veggies (carrots, onions, parsnip, celery, string beans) or we do the next best thing -- buy packaged soup found in the supermarket's frozen food section, then add vegetables. In either case, we add the

most potent and health-restoring ingredient -- garlic. To derive the full healing powers of garlic, add one or two finely minced raw cloves after the warmed soup is in the bowl.

Bottom Line/Personal interviewed Lydia Wilen and Joan Wilen, folk-remedy experts based in New York City. The sisters are co-authors of many books, including *Bottom Line's Healing Remedies: Over 1,000 Astounding Ways to Heal Arthritis, Asthma, High Blood Pressure, Varicose Veins, Warts and More!* (Bottom Line Books, 800-678-5835, www.BottomLineSecrets.com/store).

<http://www.fgb.com.au/NaturalUses/CoughColdsCroup.html>

Immune System Support

While there are things you can do to help prevent colds ([see Preventing Colds & Flu](#)), there is no cure. Antibiotics are useless against the common cold – they treat bacterial infections, not viral ones.

While getting adequate rest & fluids is the most important way to assist your body to heal, good nutrition can also help.

Balanced Diet

It is important to maintain a normal, healthy diet to provide the nutrients your body needs to fight off a cold. While you should not eat if not hungry, healthy light meals such as salads and soup can help keep energy levels up.

Try to include plenty of **Vitamin C**-rich fruits and vegetables, such as citrus fruits, green leafy vegetables, tomatoes and capsicum. A supplement may help if the diet is inadequate. Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant and helps support the immune system in the battle against colds and flu.

Garlic has anti-viral and mucous-reducing properties and can also help the body's natural healing processes.

It's important to keep fluid intake up, so drink plenty of water. And don't forget those old folk remedies of a cup of hot lemon and honey tea or chicken soup are still remarkably effective!

Helpful Supplements

Zinc is a co-factor in many enzyme processes in the human body, especially the immune system. When zinc is deficient, immune cells show decreased function.¹

With strong anti-viral properties, studies have shown zinc supplementation can help reduce the duration of the common cold.²

Herbs can also help build immunity and assist the body to recover faster. **Echinacea** is a widely known and popular herb which can help treat and reduce the symptoms of the common cold.

Another important cold-fighting herb is **Astragalus**. Considered by many to be even more potent than echinacea, this highly revered Chinese herb has been used for centuries for its immune-boosting properties and to treat upper respiratory tract infections.

Astragalus increases virus-fighting T-cells in the immune system, helping fight off the infection and shorten the duration of the cold.³

Gentle, Non-Invasive Treatments for Coughs & Colds

Anaesthetics, antiseptics, anti-inflammatories, antihistamines, pseudoephedrine, antitussives, mucolytics... the world of pharmaceutical cold and flu remedies is wide and confusing. While some drug-based treatments are appropriate at times, they can also have side-effects. In some cases, many are only suppressive and not a 'cure' for the cold.

Vapour Therapy

Remember sitting with your head under a towel over a bowl of steaming water? This simple remedy is still one of the best ways to treat congestion caused by the common cold. Our bodies are up to 60% water and the respiratory system needs moisture to operate effectively – if not, it cannot do its job of trapping cold and flu viruses and keeping the airways clear.

Warm steam loosens phlegm, helps clear congestion from the chest and nasal passages and allows easier breathing.

Steam therapy can help both chesty coughs, dry coughs and nasal congestion– by making it easier to expel mucous, reducing irritation and moisturising the delicate mucous membranes of the throat.⁴

Steam vaporisers are an easy and convenient way to reap the benefits of steam therapy - particularly during the night and in children's bedrooms, allowing more restful sleep. Read more about [Vapor Therapy](#) here.

Eucalyptus Oil – Nature's Cold & Flu Fighter

Ahh... eucalyptus oil. Its clean, fresh familiar fragrance is as revitalising as it is comforting. [Bosisto's Eucalyptus Oil](#) has been long renowned for its ability to help provide soothing relief of cold and flu symptoms, with powerful expectorant (mucous- loosening) properties which help clear chest and nose congestion. It also has a natural disinfectant and antibacterial action which can assist in fighting colds & flu. Over 150 years old, this tried-and-true Aussie remedy is still a family favourite today.

Here's just a few ways to use **Bosisto's Eucalyptus Oil** (and other eucalyptus-based products) for colds:

- Add [Bosisto's Eucalyptus Inhalant](#) to your steam vaporiser's water chamber. The soothing vapours provide all night relief for the symptoms of colds and to ease nasal stuffiness
- You can also use **Bosisto's Eucalyptus Oil** or **Inhalant** in a bowl of steaming water or a hand-held [Vapour Inhaler](#) if at work
- Sprinkle **Bosisto's Eucalyptus Oil** on the bottom of the shower – the hot water will evaporate the oil providing a refreshing wake-up call and helps clear the nasal passages in the morning
- A drop or two of **Bosisto's Eucalyptus Oil** on a handkerchief carried around during the day helps provide all-day natural sinus relief.
- Use [Bosisto's Eucalyptus Spray](#) around the house and bedrooms to disinfect and kill germs, leaving a fresh bushland fragrance.
- Using a eucalyptus-based chest rub such as [Euky Bearub](#) at night can help comfort, soothe and provide relief from cold and flu symptoms.
- Ask your pharmacist about saline solutions to help clear stubborn nasal congestion – a natural alternative to steroid nasal sprays. Or try [Nasex](#) which contains natural eucalyptus essential oils, for effective temporary relief.

Supplementary Measures to Treat Colds

- Rest - especially if you have a chest cold. Gentle exercise is fine if you have mild head-cold symptoms (runny nose, watery eyes) but rest is most definitely needed if your symptoms are below the neck (cough, general weakness and fatigue).
- Stop smoking, or avoid passive smoke – both impair lung function and irritate the respiratory tract.
- Take paracetamol if you have a fever.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough, and wash your hands to prevent passing the infection on to others.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/>
Antibiotics Are Not for Colds and Flu

Taking antibiotics for viral infections — such as a cold, cough, the flu, and acute bronchitis —

- Will not cure the infection.
- Will not keep other individuals from catching the illness.
- Will not help a person feel better.
- May cause an unnecessary harmful side effect.

Colds: Colds are caused by viruses and may last for two weeks or longer. Antibiotics have no effect on cold viruses, but your doctor may have suggestions for obtaining comfort while the illness runs its course.

What Does Work On Colds and Flu

- Water and other fluids. You can't flush a cold out of your system, but drinking plenty of liquids can help. Water, juice, clear broth or warm lemon water with honey helps loosen congestion and prevents dehydration.
- Salt Water. A saltwater gargle - 1/2 teaspoon salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water - can temporarily relieve a sore or scratchy throat.
- Saline Nasal Sprays. Over-the-counter saline nasal sprays combat stuffiness and congestion. Also do-it-yourself saline irrigation is good for clearing the sinus.
- Chicken Soup. The UCLA Evidence: No wonder chicken soup is a fabled remedy for colds: It contains druglike agents similar to those in modern cold medicines, says Irwin Ziment, M.D., pulmonary specialist and professor at the UCLA School of Medicine. For example, cysteine, an amino acid released from chicken in cooking, chemically resembles the drug acetylcysteine, prescribed for bronchitis and other respiratory problems. Pungent ingredients often added to chicken soup, such as garlic, cayenne pepper and curry spices, all are ancient treatments for respiratory diseases. They work the same way as expectorant drugs and cough medicines, thinning mucus and making breathing easier. The more garlic and hot spices added to chicken soup, Ziment says, the better the soup will be at clearing your lungs. His bottom line: Chicken soup is probably the best therapy there is for a cold.
- Humidity. Cold viruses thrive in dry conditions - another reason why colds are more common in winter. Parched air also dries the mucous membranes, causing a stuffy nose and scratchy throat. Use humidifiers and when colds and flu strike breathing moist air with menthol. Eucalyptus this pungent woody and spicy oil helps to stimulate circulation. Eucalyptus oil is often used in a steam inhalation to help clear nasal and sinus congestion. It is said to function in a fashion similar to that of menthol by acting on receptors in the nasal mucosa, leading to a reduction in the symptoms of, for example, nasal congestion and loosening of lung congestion.

http://www.health911.com/remedies/rem_coughs.htm

Coughs

A cough is the body's response to inflammation or irritation in the throat, larynx, bronchial tubes or lungs. There are two basic kinds of coughs, congested and dry, with each one having different underlying causes.

Congested Coughs

Causes

The obvious causes of coughing are colds, flu, bronchial infections, sinus congestion, smoking, and the need to rid the throat of foreign matter. But did you know that heartburn is one of the leading causes? For some unknown reason heartburn is the cause for about 10% of chronic coughers. See our Heartburn section for suggestions to relieve both the heartburn and coughing. Dust, pollen and

chemicals are other sources of irritants. Also, some drugs, most notably ACE inhibitors used for high blood pressure, have coughing as a side effect in 21% of the people using them. Coughing is also a common symptom of asthma. The sound of your cough may indicate its cause. Below is a list of the cough sounds and what that may indicate:

- A barking cough - bronchitis or croup
- A high-pitched cough - your vocal cords are involved and the airways have become narrowed
- A wheezing cough - asthma and/or bronchitis
- A loud, gasping cough with difficulty getting air - whooping cough

Tips

- Breathe the steam from a vaporizer, hot shower, or pan of boiling water. The moist air will soothe the airways and loosen sinus congestion and phlegm in your throat and lungs. A few drops of the oil of eucalyptus will help this process.
- Elevate the head of your bed. This will allow your sinuses and nasal passages to drain better and not create that "tickle" in your throat.
- Stop smoking. Passive smoke or other irritants, such as chemicals, can be a cause. Household cleaners, new carpeting, paneling and mattresses are some of the many possible sources of chemical irritants.
- Drink at least 8 eight ounce glasses of water. This is especially important if your cough is due to an illness. Water is the best expectorant you can take and will help thin the mucus and loosen the cough.
- Do not use over-the-counter expectorant cough remedies as they just suppress the symptoms and do not address the underlying problem. If you have the kind of cough with mucus you want to get it out of your respiratory system, not suppress it. Try one of the natural expectorant remedies below.
- Try eating hot chili peppers, horseradish or other spicy foods. They will help loosen mucus.
- During the winter, if your house is dry, use a humidifier and a cool-mist vaporizer in your bedroom at night. This will help thin the mucus. Be sure to thoroughly clean the vaporizer, as it can harbor bacteria.
- Drink hot tea to break up the mucus and open and moisten the airways.
- Cough drops or hard candy will help stop the tickle if you have a dry cough and will moisten the throat.
- Avoid foods that increase the production of mucus, such as dairy products, meat and fried foods.
- Hot packs placed on your throat and chest are very soothing.

Supplements

Vitamins A, C and E are beneficial with conditions that cause coughs.

Aromatherapy

The use of inhaled steam can be very effective in liquefying mucus and reducing irritation. To control the steam, bend over the steaming water while holding a towel over your head. Try some of these aromatherapy oils. Inhaling essential oils can stimulate your lungs to expel phlegm.

Cypress Add three drops each of cypress and juniper oil and a drop of ginger.

Cedar Dilute 3 drops of oil of cedar in one teaspoon of carrier oil, such as olive, sweet almond or jojoba, and massage onto your chest several times a day.

- Add 10-15 drops to a pot of steaming water and inhale the vapors

Eucalyptus Add a few drops of eucalyptus to a carrier oil and rub on your chest.

- Put 10-15 drops of oil in boiling water and inhale the steam. Eucalyptus is a good decongestant and expectorant. You can also add three drops of hyssop oil.

Jasmine Use the oil in a burner or put a few drops on a handkerchief and inhale the fumes.

Myrrh Add a few drops of myrrh to a carrier oil and rub on your chest. This will help reduce mucus.

Peppermint Dilute 3 drops of peppermint oil in one teaspoon of carrier oil, such as olive, sweet almond or jojoba, and massage onto your chest several times a day.

- Add 10-15 drops to a pot of steaming water and inhale the vapors.

Pine Put some essential pine oil in a burner to soothe the throat. You can also place a few drops on a handkerchief and inhale the fumes.

Thyme Add 10-15 drops of this oil in a pan of boiling water and inhale the fumes, in an infuser, or place a few drops on a handkerchief and inhale.

- Massaging using oil of thyme may also be helpful in relieving your cough. Put 5 drops in ¼ cup olive oil and massage your neck and upper body. Thyme is an excellent expectorant and has been used for centuries to heal respiratory conditions.

Reflexology

Rub the padded area below your big toe in various directions at the first sign of a cough. Also, hold back the toes and press on the raised area with your thumb. This will help relieve chest congestion.

Folk Remedies

Aloe vera Mix equal parts of aloe juice and honey. This is very good for a scratchy cough.

Angelica Use a tincture of the root or leaf, or make a tea. Angelica is an expectorant. Do not use if you are pregnant.

Bee balm Native Americans used bee balm to alleviate colds and coughs. Steep two teaspoons of fresh (one, dried) bee balm leaves in a cup of hot water, covered, for four minutes. Sip a cup three times a day. Bee balm has antiseptic compounds that can help heal respiratory infections and clear nasal congestion.

Carrot juice Mix with honey and a little warm water. Take a tablespoonful several times a day.

Cayenne pepper Mix ¼-½ teaspoon of pepper in a glass of water and use as a gargle, swallowing afterward. You can also use 15-20 drops of Tabasco sauce in a glass of water or juice. Pepper helps clear congestion and draws blood to the throat to fight infection.

Chamomile tea will soothe the throat.

Garlic Grate one or two cloves of garlic and mix with a teaspoon of honey. Take as needed.

Ginger Make a tea using ginger and drink 6 oz several times a day, as needed.

Grape juice Mix a cup of grape juice with a teaspoon of honey.

Honey Mix honey with juice of a fresh lemon and take as needed. Not only does honey soothe the tickle, but it has antibacterial properties, too.

- Dr. D. C. Jarvis, in his classic book, Folk Medicine, described another honey remedy that worked very well: boil a whole lemon for 10 minutes; when cool enough to handle roll it back and forth on a hard surface, cut it in half and squeeze the juice into a pint of raw honey. Add a teaspoon of glycerin and take as often as needed.

Horehound cough drops have been used for generations to quell coughs. One of horehound's compounds, marrubiin, stimulates bronchial secretions and helps break up congestion.

Hyssop Steep two teaspoons of dried hyssop in one cup of boiling water, covered for ten minutes; strain and drink cool for an expectorant or hot to relieve congestion. The oils in hyssop are good for mild respiratory problems. Hyssop contains marrubiin, the same compound that makes horehound an excellent expectorant.

Lime juice Mix equal parts of lime juice and honey.

Mullein soothes and relaxes the lungs and bronchial tubes, which eases a cough. Use 25-30 drops of tincture in a small glass of boiling water three times a day.

Onion broth Make a broth by boiling an onion for 10-15 minutes; strain and drink the broth several times a day. The broth will reduce congestion.

Onion juice Make a syrup by combining 1 teaspoonful of raw onion juice with 1 teaspoonful of honey; let stand for 3-4 hours, and take in divided doses.

Tea Tea made with peppermint or rosemary will help break up congestion.

Thyme Make a tea using two tablespoons of fresh (one tablespoon of dried) thyme in a cup of boiling water; steep, covered, for four minutes; strain and drink hot. Thyme relaxes the lungs and promotes expectoration of mucus. It contains a volatile oil, thymol, which has antiseptic and antibacterial properties.

Dry Coughs

A dry cough will be raspy and without phlegm and may be due to smoking, asthma, dust, foreign matter, pollution, or come after a sore throat. Another cause of your dry cough could be a climate-controlled building. The heating and cooling systems dry the air and your respiratory membranes, too. Rapid temperature and humidity changes upon entering a building add to the problem. Chronic coughing, sneezing and a runny nose may be the result. If you work in a climate-controlled building, avoid cold drinks and food as they interfere with your body's ability to maintain its optimal temperature. During the air-conditioning season cold foods and drinks affect your body's temperature and its ability to adjust to the building's conditions; instead drink hot liquids and eat warm foods. When your building is heated, drink fluids at room temperature. You want to soothe the mucus membranes and moisturize your throat.

Inhaling steam from a pan with one of the essential oils mentioned above added is particularly helpful with dry coughs.

Folk Remedies

Aloe vera juice Mix equal parts of aloe vera juice and honey and take a tablespoon or two as needed. Good for a smoker's cough.

Apple cider vinegar Sprinkle apple cider vinegar on your pillowcase before bedtime.

- Put 1 or 2 teaspoons of vinegar in a glass of water and keep beside your bed to use when you feel the tickling sensation coming on. Take a few swallows as needed. Vinegar dissolves mucus and reduces inflammation.
- Mix ½ cup of honey with 3-4 tablespoons of vinegar. Take one tablespoon before going to bed or during a coughing fit, and throughout the day, as needed. Stir well before use.

Comfrey Take a comfrey tea for dry persistent coughs. Comfrey should not be taken for long term use as it may cause liver damage.

Codonopsis root Use a decoction, tincture or powder for chronic coughs.

Garlic Mince a clove of garlic and place in a small bowl; cover with honey and cover the bowl with plastic wrap; marinate overnight. Take one tablespoonful upon awakening, then throughout the day, as needed.

Honey Add a tablespoon of honey to a glass of boiling water and drink as needed. This will soothe the throat.

Horehound lozenges help suppress a dry cough.

Licorice root Take 5 grams of powdered root with honey three times a day. You can also make a decoction by using ½ teaspoon to one cup of water. Take three cups daily. Licorice has soothing and anti-inflammatory properties, and is an expectorant. Do not use if you have high blood pressure.

Tea Make a tea of wild cherry bark, slippery elm or red clover. Sweeten with honey.

Zinc lozenges are helpful.

Homeopathy

Antimonium tart Is to be used if the cough is loose and rattling with little or no phlegm and breathing is painful.

Bryonia Use when a cold has gone to the chest and turned in to a hard, dry cough.

Drosera Use for a cough after which you have a whooping sound or with vomiting.

Ferrum phos. Is beneficial for a hard, dry cough with a tickle.

See Your Doctor When...

If you have any of the following conditions along with your cough, see your doctor without delay because you may have an infection, or the cough may indicate the presence of a more serious health condition.

- Your cough doesn't get better after a few days. Coughing can lead to fractured ribs or a heart attack.
- You cough up blood or bloody mucus.
- Your mucus is yellow, brown or green and does not improve in a few days. This will indicate that you have an infection.
- If you cough for more than three days for no apparent reason.

Or, if you have:

- Shortness of breath when you cough.
- Sharp pains in your chest when you cough.
- A fever along with a persistent cough. This could be indicative of a serious respiratory illness. If you have a high fever and difficulty breathing you may have pneumonia.
- Chest pain
- Persistent chills
- Excessive night sweats
- Laryngitis and a persistent cough that lasts for more than three weeks.
- A skin rash, earache, pain in the teeth or sinuses, or a headache.