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Conquering the Common Cold

By Mari Peckham

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What do we know about the Common Cold?

No Cure. Antibiotics, designed to knock out bacterial infections, do nothing when it comes to treating a cold.

None of us are safe! No matter how strong and healthy we are, an occasional cold will reduce us to whimpering, sneezing, coughing versions of our former selves.

So, what do we do? Lay back with a box of tissue, pop a couple of cold tabs and wait it out? Not necessarily! Doctors who specialize in self-care medicine say that there is a lot more that we can do to get through a cold comfortably, and possibly more quickly! Here is some of the best advice that experts have to offer on the subject.

Vitamin C – "Vitamin C works in the body as a scavenger, picking up all sorts of trash – including virus trash," Says Keith W. Sehnert, M.D., a physician with Trinity Health Care in Minneapolis, Minnesota. "It can shorten the length of a cold from seven days to maybe two or three."

Studies conducted at the University of Wisconsin found that cold sufferers taking 500 milligrams of vitamin C four times a day suffered from about half as many symptoms (coughing, sneezing, etc) as those not taking the vitamin.

Best way to get it? Drink it! Orange, grapefruit, and cranberry juices are excellent sources of vitamin C.

Zinc – Suck on zinc lozenges and cut your cold short, to an average of just 4 days! It also can help reduce symptoms such as dry, irritated throat. Unfortunately, it doesn't work for everyone, but when it works, it works!

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R and R – Take a day or two off of work, or at least slow down! Extra rest enables your body to focus its energy on getting you well.

Stay Warm – Keep your immune system cozy by bundling up against the cold. This way your body can use energy to fight your cold instead of protecting you from the cold.

Eat Lightly – Eat, but steer clear of foods that put a strain on your body's metabolism. Eat fewer fatty foods, meat and milk products, and eat more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Chicken Soup – A silly folk remedy? No! Researchers at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach have found that hot chicken soup, either because of its aroma or its taste, "appears to possess an additional substance for increasing the flow of nasal mucus." Researchers say that this mucus serves as a first line of defense in removing germs from your system, so eat up!

Liquids – Drink six to eight glasses of water, juice, tea, and other mostly clear liquids daily to keep the body hydrated and to flush out impurities.

NO Smoking! – Smoking aggravates the throat and interferes with the infection-fighting activity of the cilia, the microscopic "fingers" that sweep bacteria out of your lungs and throat. Even if you don't quit for good, at least stop for the duration of your cold.

Salty Gargle – Dr. Van Ert of San Francisco advises mixing 1 teaspoon of salt into a glass of warm water and gargling away whenever your throat hurts.

Hot Toddy – Get a good night's sleep and clear a stuffed-up nose by sipping a "hot toddy" or a half a glass of wine before bedtime, suggests Dr. Caughron, a family practitioner specializing in preventive medicine in Charlottesville, Virginia. But don't go overboard! More alcohol than that can stress out your system and make recovery more difficult.

Get Steamed – Clear congestion and relieve a dry cough by taking a hot steamy shower. Or make a steam tent by draping a towel over your head above a bowl of boiling water.

Keep Your Germs to Yourself – Cough and blow away, but do it into a disposable tissue instead of sharing them! Then promptly throw the tissue away and wash your hands.

Medicate – If you decide to take over the counter medication, follow the instructions carefully and only take medication that addresses the symptoms that you are suffering from.

Looking for alternatives to drugs? Try these herbs and teas that contain special properties that are natural antagonists against colds!

Goldenseal and Echinacea – "I recommend herb capsules such as goldenseal and echinacea at the early onset of a cold," says Elson Haas, M.D. He says that goldenseal stimulates your liver, which helps to clear up infections. Echinacea clean your blood and lymph glands, helping circulate infection-fighting antibodies and removing toxic substances from the body. Try one or two capsules

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twice a day for up to two weeks.

Garlic – Garlic is known for its antibiotic effect and "can actually kill germs and clear up your cold symptoms more rapidly," says Dr. Haas. He recommends two or three oil-free garlic capsules three times a day.

Licorice Root Tea – Dr Van Ert recommends this teas for it's anesthetizing effects for soothing irritated throats and relieving coughs.

Other Teas – Celestial Seasonings Sleepytime tea, or tea brewed with hops or valarian her, have natural tranquilizing effects that will help you rest. Add a teaspoon of honey, a simple carbohydrate that has a sedative effect.

Monolaurian – Dr. Van Ert also recommends this fatty acid (available in capsule form) for it's antiviral effect. He recommends taking two capsules three times a day with some food, for helping the immune system stay fit to battle the cold virus.

A cold may be something that we have to live with, and through, but finding ways to make the best of it will help you get back on your feet in record time.

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Cold And Flu Defense

By Andrew Cavanagh

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Cold and Flu defense can be simple, natural and healthy.

The simplest, most effective, proven cold and flu defense is hygiene.

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More specifically paying special attention to the way you wash your hands and other neglected but simple natural hygiene therapies like nasal irrigation.

Most people think viruses fly through the air then into your nose or mouth. If that were true then the best cold and flu defense would be vitamin C and anti-viral drugs.

But viruses like the cold and flu don't fly - they hitchhike.

You usually pick up droplets of a cold or flu virus from hand to hand contact or from objects like doorknobs, telephones or tables.

Over 90% of cold and flu viruses enter your body when you touch your eyes or your nose with your fingernails.

So cold and flu defense rule number one – don't touch your face with your hands.

Your fingernails carry more viruses like the cold and flu than any other part of your body.

The skin under your fingernails lack the horny layer that protects other skin on your body. Combine this with the actual nail and you create a safe, warm place for cold and flu viruses and bacteria to survive.

Washing your fingernails regularly is crucial as a first line of cold and flu defense.

Regular, effective hand washing helps reduce your chance of inoculating yourself with a cold or flu virus and helps you avoid passing a cold or flu virus on to someone you know through hand to hand contact.

So cold and flu virus defense rule number two - wash your hands regularly and pay special attention to washing your fingernails.

Using hand washing as an effective first line of cold and flu defense can be more complicated than it seems on the surface.

You need to use the right kind of soap and you can make several potentially dangerous mistakes when you wash your hands.

Also washing your hands is just the beginning.

Other therapies like nasal irrigation are vital if you want natural, powerful cold and flu defense...

Read the free report on natural cold and flu defense and how to protect yourself from other killer viruses like the bird flu at

For more details on cold and flu defense

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