

COLD AND FLU COMPLEMENTARY REMEDIES

PREVENTION is always the most important way to reduce the chance of getting sick in the first place. Some important strategies for cold and flu prevention would be: hand-washing, avoiding direct contact with people who are ill, proper sleep and fluid intake, stress reduction/relaxation techniques, moderate alcohol, balanced (organic whenever possible) diet with at least 6 helpings of fresh fruits/vegetables per day.

1. For Influenza (Flu) virus:

- **Oscillococcinum**, (homeopathic) one vial of pellets under the tongue three times a day. (Works only in the first two to three days of symptoms.)
- *Prescription medications*: helpful for reducing the virus' severity and duration, and also preventive for known exposure: **Tamiflu, Flumadine; Relenza; amantadine**.
- Other immune supportive supplements per below

2. For Upper Respiratory (Colds) or Influenza (Flu) viruses: to be taken anytime during the illness, the sooner, the better, until symptoms abate.

- **For General immune support** (In general order of preference. More than one at a time may be used):
 - a. *Chinese Herbs*: from American companies: **Viagraphis** by Xymogen or **Cold Away** by Health Concerns; or in Chinatown, **Gan-Mao-Ling** or **Yin Chiao**: Use for up to one week (n.b. Chinese herbs are often more powerful than Western herbs)
 - b. *Echinacea* three times a day in capsule or tincture form. For best effect, use in combination with other immune-enhancing herbs (Echinacea by itself is usually ineffective). Reliable brands: **Esberitox** by enzymatic Therapy; **Insure** by Zand; **Immunotone** by Phytopharmica
 - c. **Zicam** (homeopathic) nasal spray: three times a day
 - d. *Black Elderberry* (ie **Sambucol**) elixir: a good choice for children
 - e. **Zinc lozenges** (ie **Cold-Eze**) especially if having sore throat. Use up to three times a day for the first three to four days only.
 - f. **Vitamin C** 1000mg a day total, in divided doses
 - g. Many people find **Airborne** helpful in preventively/immediately upon exposure (ie for travel).
- **For Specific Symptoms:**
 - a. *Sinus Blockage*: add a decongestant. Try herbal **Nazonal** first (by Metagenics; has no pseudophedrine or other stimulants), then **Sudafed** (can be too drying/stimulating for some).
 - b. *For Chest and/or Sinus Congestion*:
 - i. Use an expectorant (ie *Robitussin/guaifgenesin* (such as OTC **Mucinex** tablets) and/or gentle decongestant **Nazonal** (Sudafed's drying action can make matters worse for chest congestion.)
 - ii. **Steam inhalation treatments** with essential oils: **Vick's**, or preferably combination of two or more **essential oils** *rosemary/eucalyptus/camphor/methol* and/or *tea tree oil*.
 - iii. Homeopathic **Lymphomyosot** sublingual drops
 - c. *For Sore Throat*: Gargles: **Hydrogen peroxide** or **tea tree oil** (dilute with water, gargle and spit out), or **Listerine**
 - d. *For headaches, pain, fever*: **aspirin, ibuprofen** (*Advil*, etc.), **Tylenol** (*acetaminophen*)
 - e. Homeopathy may work for the above, but often needs a specific provider-prescribed remedy.

Note: Flus and Colds are caused by viruses. Antibiotics only treat bacteria not viruses and are NOT helpful for pure viral illnesses (occasionally the infections occur in combination or bacterial infections present similar to colds or right after colds – but this is the exception, not the rule.)

For all of the above remedies, you must contact your healthcare provider first to make sure of the safety and appropriateness for your use.