

Common Cold: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Nasal discomfort with watery discharge and sneezing Dry, sore throat

Red, swollen nasal passages, swollen lymph nodes on the neck

QUICK REVIEW

- Many of the symptoms of the cold are a result of our body's defense mechanisms.
- The value of sleep and rest during a cold cannot be overemphasized.
- Consuming plenty of liquids and/or using a vaporizer maintains a moist respiratory tract that repels viral infection.
- Vitamin C at a dosage of 1 to 6 grams per day decreases the duration of the cold episodes by nearly one full day.
- The argument in the medical literature that vitamin C has no effect on the common cold seems to be based in large part on a faulty review written two decades ago.
- If they are properly prepared, zinc lozenges can be effective in reducing the duration of symptoms.
- In 1994, German physicians and pharmacists prescribed Echinacea for the common cold more than 2.5 million times.

Nutritional Supplements

- Vitamin C: 500-1,000 mg every two hours (decrease if it produces excessive gas or diarrhea), along with 1,000 g of mixed bioflavonoids per day
 - Vitamin A: 15,000-25,000 IU per day for up to four days
- WARNING: Do NOT FOLLOW THIS RECOMMENDATION FOR VITAMIN A IF YOU ARE PREGNANT OR A SEXUALLY ACTIVE WOMAN NOT EMPLOYING EFFECTIVE BIRTH CONTROL.
- Beta-carotene* 50,000-100,000 IU per day
 - Zinc lozenges

SUMMARY

Although the focus of this chapter was on the use of natural methods to assist the body in recovering from the common cold, prevention is by far the best medicine. The old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is true for the common cold as well as the majority of other conditions afflicting human health. Prevention involves strengthening the immune system, as detailed in the chapter IMMUNE FUNCTION. The following are recommendations as to what to do if a cold develops.

- Rest (bed rest is best)
- Drink large amounts of fluids (preferably diluted vegetable juices, soups, and herb teas)

- Limit simple sugar consumption (including fruit sugars) to less than 50 grams a day juice of aerial portion of *E. purpurea* stabilized in 22% ethanol: 2-3 ml Tincture (1:5): 2-4 ml

Fluid extract (1:1): 2-4 ml

Solid (dry powdered) extract (6.5:1 or 3.5% echinacoside): 150-300 mg

- Zinc lozenges: Use lozenges that supply 15 to 25 mg of elemental zinc with glycine as the sweetener; dissolve in the mouth every two waking hours after an initial double dose; continue for up to seven days. Prolonged supplementation (for more than one week) at this dose is not recommended, as it may lead to suppression of the immune system.

Botanical Medicines • *Echinacea sp.*

All dosages are three times per day. Dried root (or as tea): 0.5-1 g Freeze-dried plant: 325--650 mg