



## EMMA SUTHERLAND

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### **Cold & Flu Advice**

We can't avoid exposure to the viruses that cause colds and flu but below are some helpful tips to stop them taking hold.

#### **Relax and get quality sleep.**

Stress increases the levels of adrenal gland hormones, including adrenalin and corticosteroids. Among other things, these hormones inhibit white blood cell formation and function and cause the thymus gland to shrink. The effects of these hormones lead to a significant suppression of immune function, leaving the body susceptible to infections. The level of immune suppression is usually proportional to the level of stress; the greater the stress the greater the negative impact on the nervous system. Relaxation methods and good quality sleep will go a long way in boosting your immunity and decreasing the likelihood of catching a cold or flu,

#### **Cut back on the sugar.**

Consumption of carbohydrate in the form glucose, fructose, sucrose or orange juice can significantly reduce the ability of white blood cells to destroy foreign particles and microorganisms. This impairment appears to result from the fact that sugar and vitamin C compete for transport sites into the white blood cells. Decreased vitamin C levels due to excessive sugar consumption may result in significant reduction in white blood cell function. Since white blood cell function constitutes a major portion of the defense mechanism against infection, impairment to their activity obviously leads to an immune-compromised state.

#### **Wash your hands often.**

Cold viruses can survive for several hours on hands, tissues, or hard surfaces. A healthy person can contract the virus by touching a contaminated surface, then touching his or her own mouth or nose. Studies demonstrate that the constant auto-inoculation of the nose and eyes by the fingertip area leads to an overloaded immune system and most of the infections of the upper respiratory tract. Keyboards and telephones – particularly when they are shared - are among the most germ-laden places in a home or office and the average desk harbors 400 times more bacteria than the average toilet seat! Washing your hands will decrease your likelihood of spreading a virus to your nose, mouth or other people.

#### **Exercise.**

Studies suggest that moderate exercise is beneficial to strengthen the immune system. When you exercise you increase blood circulation through your body, therefore better circulating anti-bodies and white blood cells, which means your immune system has a better chance of finding an illness before it has a chance to spread. A study was done with fifty women divided into exercise and non exercise groups. The exercise group walked briskly 45 minutes for 5 days a week. The **women who walked experienced half as many colds as the non exercise group**. Walkers had an increase in natural killer cells from the beginning. Natural killer cells are part of the defense against germs and viruses.



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### Effective natural treatments to increase resistance and relieve the symptoms of colds and flu.

#### Zinc Lozenges

Six double blind studies have shown that zinc is effective in relieving symptoms of the flu and colds. The best known of these studies is the one conducted by the Cleveland Clinic and published in the July 15, 1996 issue of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Within 24 hours of coming down with cold symptoms, 50 people began dissolving zinc lozenges in their mouths every two hours while they were awake. Those taking the **zinc lozenges recovered in an average of 4.4 days, compared with 7.6 days for those who had been given placebos.**

#### Andrographis

In 2004 two review papers were published assessing the results of over 10 clinical trials on the immune activity of *Andrographis*. These trials demonstrated superior results for alleviating many common symptoms of uncomplicated upper respiratory infections, such as the common cold and influenza. One trial showed subjects suffering from the common cold reported a significant decrease in their tiredness, sore throat, nasal secretions and sleep disturbance by day two of their illness, compared to those who did not take the extract. By day four there **was significant improvement in all symptoms.**

#### Fermented Foods and Probiotics

Kimchi (pronounced kim-chee) is a Korean spicy fermented side dish that has been getting a lot of press since the BBC published a report by scientists in Seoul, Korea who found that 11 of 13 chickens infected with the avian flu started to recover after they were fed an extract of kimchi. The key ingredient is likely a natural organic acid called lactic acid, that's also found in sauerkraut, milk, yogurt, kefir (a yogurt-like effervescent beverage), meat, and beer.

Popular probiotic "friendly bacteria" supplements such as lactobacillus acidophilus also produce lactic acid. A German double-blind, placebo-controlled study involving 477 people found that those who took a daily probiotic supplement had **significantly less respiratory tract infections**. People who caught the flu had fewer symptoms and shorter fever duration.

**There are many other herbs and natural supplements that can boost your immunity and help lessen the duration and symptoms of the common cold and flu.**