

## **Cold and Flu Strategies: Simple Recommendations for Staying Healthy**

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Your best strategy is to act quickly whenever you notice symptoms that might indicate that your immune system is being challenged. These symptoms may be different for everyone but can include slightly swollen glands, a scratchy throat, dry eyes, body aches and pains, chills, etc. If you use immune-stimulating herbs and supplements at this stage, it is highly likely that you can ward off a cold or flu, or at least reduce the severity of your symptoms.

**Step 1** – To be used at the first signs of illness. You can use one or all of these suggestions. Frequency of dosage is critical in order to provide your immune system with as much support as possible.

- **Boiron “Oscillocochinum”.** This homeopathic remedy is a proven preventative for colds and flu. It does not cause drowsiness nor does it have any side effects. Take one vial of pills by pouring them directly into your mouth under your tongue. Allow them to dissolve completely and don't eat or drink anything for at least 15 minutes before and after taking Oscillo. Repeat every six hours as needed.
- **Echinacea Capsules or Tincture.** Echinacea stimulates the immune system and strengthens your defenses against invading pathogens. Take 3 capsules or 60 drops of tincture (in a small amount of water) every two to three hours throughout the day.
- **Ravensara or Thyme Essential Oil.** These highly concentrated essential oils provide a strong dose of defense against infections. To use, take a hot bath using one of these oils as described here. To take an essential oil bath: Run a hot bath. While the bath is running, put ¼ cup of milk (cow, soy, rice, etc) in a cup and add 8 to 10 drops of essential oil. Mix well using a spoon. When you are ready, pour the milk/oil mixture in the bath and use your hand to swirl the mixture throughout the bath. (If you don't have any kind of milk, you can put about 1 tablespoon of lotion in your hand and add the oils to the lotion, mix well with your finger then hold the lotion under hot running water to disperse into the bath.)

Soak in the bath for at least 20 minutes. Try to get as much of your body under the water as possible. Be careful not to get any water in your eyes! Do not use soap or shampoo in the bath. After 20 minutes, dry off completely, dress warmly and get into bed under lots of covers. You will probably sweat which is good. Take a nap if possible or go to sleep for the night.
- Increase fluid intake. Drink lots of water and herbal tea.
- Eat soups and light foods. Chicken soup really does work.
- Avoid sugar and dairy products.
- Throw away your toothbrush and get a new one. Replace as needed if you do get sick.
- Eat garlic. Finely chop two cloves of garlic and mix with a small amount of butter or olive oil. Put on toast, in soup, on rice or as is several times a day.

**Step 2** – Treating a cold or flu. If your symptoms progress into a full-blown cold or flu, try these suggestions to relieve your discomfort and reduce the severity of the illness.

- **Echinacea** – Continue to use echinacea in frequent, high doses throughout the illness. Take 3 capsules or 60 drops of tincture three to four times a day. It is probably a good idea for everyone in your home to take echinacea if anyone is sick. Dosage is the same.
- **Herbal Teas** – There are several excellent herb tea blends that really help relieve cold and flu symptoms. Be sure to breathe in the vapors of hot tea for added immune support. Try to have some of these teas on hand at all times during cold and flu season. My favorites are made by Traditional Medicinals and can be found in most natural foods groceries, as well as in many chain supermarkets. Some blends to consider:
  - Gypsy Cold Care – for body aches, congestion and sore throat.
  - Throat Coat – soothing for sore throats and coughs, add lots of honey.
  - HerbaTussin – to relieve deep congestion in the lungs and sinuses.
  - Breathe Easy – great for opening the nasal and bronchial passages.
- **Eucalyptus Inhalation** – This old-fashioned method for relieving respiratory congestion can't be beat. Bring two cups of water to a rapid boil, pour into a stable bowl and add 2 drops of essential oil. Sit with your head about 12 inches from the surface of the water and drape a towel over your head and the bowl. Breathe deeply for as long as possible. Have plenty of tissues nearby! Repeat every two to three hours as needed.
- **Cough Syrup** – There are many effective herbal cough syrups available now. Some good brands are Tom's, Olbas, Traditional Medicinals and others. Take as directed to relieve cough symptoms.
- **Elderberry Syrup** – Elderberry syrup has anti-viral properties which address the underlying cause of many cold and flu symptoms. (And explains why repeated doses of antibiotics are often ineffective.) Safe for children and babies over 2 years of age. Take 1 teaspoon every two to three hours for three days or until symptoms improve.
- **Vitamin C** - Take 2,000 to 3,000 mg of vitamin C while you are sick and for at least five days after you feel better. If diarrhea occurs, reduce the dosage until stools are normal. Take in two or three separate doses throughout the day.
- Continue to drink plenty of fluids.
- Rest, rest, rest.
- Eat lightly. Soup, lightly steamed vegetables, rice, etc. are best.
- Don't drink orange juice. Orange juice increases mucus secretions.