Cold and Flu Relief

Did you know that over 200 viruses are known to cause what we call “The Common Cold”? They can survive on doorknobs, telephones, computers, tabletops, and even your skin for as long as 3 hours. Experts report that children can have between 6 and 12 colds a year. Adults average 2 to 4 colds per year, with women having greater numbers of colds than men, perhaps because of increased contact with children.

Conventional therapies for cold and flu focus primarily on temporary symptom relief. However, in this *Terry Talks Nutrition*, I recommend three herbal ingredients that enhance the body’s ability to fight off a cold or flu and stop it in its tracks.

**Why Treat a Cold? Is It Really THAT Serious?**

While a cold may not be very dangerous on its own, it can lead to conditions that can be life-threatening: bacterial infections like pneumonia and bronchitis.

When you are infected with a cold virus, it can cause more fluid than usual to accumulate in our sinuses and lungs—hence the runny noses, sneezes, and coughs. These warm, dark, wet places are a perfect breeding ground for bacteria that cause lung and sinus infections. Also, since the immune system is busy battling the cold virus, it may run out of steam when the bacterial invaders come along. These bacterial invasions are called “secondary infections” because they follow in the wake of the common cold.

And with everything you may have heard in the news, I probably don’t have to tell you that flu (influenza) viruses can be anywhere from mild to life-threatening. Their survival outside the body is better, too, as some strains can live for 24 hours on hard surfaces and up to 12 hours on soft.

So it is extremely important to focus on prevention, especially during cold and flu season. And anything that can shorten the duration and reduce the severity can be tremendously important, since there are no medical cures for either the common cold or influenza. Since symptoms vary greatly and are of different levels of concern based on your health history, I would highly recommend that you consult your physician as to the best way to treat any illness at the onset.

Personally, I prefer not to subject myself to a flu shot or take medication that can also cause side effects. I want my body and immune system to adjust to the virus and, in turn, become stronger for the next onslaught of the cold and flu season. I have a concern that reliance on flu shots and medications are keeping our immune systems from the natural strengthening that occurs with exposure. I wonder if this missed opportunity to strengthen our immune response leaves us ill-prepared to react to other viruses and bacteria. Fortunately, there is a better way.

**Powerful Cold-Stopping Trio:**

The first herb I recommend in this combination is the root of *Pelargonium sidoides* (Umckaloabo). This herb traditionally used by the South African Zulus for hundreds of years to treat coughs, colds, upper respiratory tract irritations, tuberculosis and gastrointestinal complaints. It is still a natural medicine prescribed by traditional healers in South Africa. According to the book *Tradition, Culture and Development in Africa* by Ambe J. Njoh, an Englishman named Charles Stevens traveled to South Africa in 1897 in search of treatment for tuberculosis. He encountered a doctor of traditional African medicine who prepared for him a decoction of *Pelargonium sidoides*. He recovered completely, and subsequently brought the plant home with him to England, where he created a medicine called “Steven’s Consumption Cure,” which became very popular.

In the early 1920’s, a Swiss medical doctor, Dr. Adrien Sechehaye, became interested in this pelargonium decoction and brought it to Switzerland, where he successfully treated over 800 patients with tuberculosis, between 1920 and 1929. In 1929, he published a collection of these medical case studies. With the advent of synthetic drugs in the 1930s, interest in botanical medicines began to decline, and Pelargonium languished for fifty years until it was revived by renewed European interest in beneficial herbal remedies.

**To your good health,**

*Terry*... Naturally

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**TERRY’S BOTTOM LINE:**

When you need to stop a cold or flu, you want more than relief—you want the illness to go away so you can recover faster. The problem with conventional medicines is that they have questionable benefits, many side effects, and may actually weaken your immune system’s ability to fend off disease causing viruses and bacteria.

There are powerful herbal ingredients that are especially effective:

- **Stops colds and the flu from taking hold**
- **Destroys bacteria and viruses**
- **Prevents dangerous secondary infections**
- **Shortens the duration of respiratory infections**
- **Safe and effective for adults and children alike**
- **Helps you feel better faster—without adverse side effects!**

**Here is the formula I suggest:**

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<tr>
<th>Proprietary Formula</th>
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<tr>
<td>Echinacea (Echinacea purpurea) Cold Pressed Juice Extract (45:1 ratio) standardized to contain &gt; 2.4% β-D-Fructofuranosides, Andrographis (Andrographis paniculata) Leaf Extract standardized to contain &gt; 30% andrographolides, Pelargonium (Pelargonium sidoides radix) Root Extract standardized for &gt; 0.3% umckalin</td>
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More...
In Germany, pelargonium has been prescribed over-the-counter since 1983 and German doctors have observed widespread effectiveness against infections of the sinus, throat and respiratory tract. Double-blind, placebo-controlled studies on patients with acute bronchitis confirmed that extracts of *Pelargonium sidoides* are effective in treating this ailment.

Children as young as six years of age have seen excellent results from Pelargonium, especially those who have not responded well to repeated treatments with antibiotics. In a recent double-blind, placebo-controlled study, 103 people with the common cold were given either *Pelargonium sidoides* or a placebo. After 5 days, the reduction of symptoms was almost double in the pelargonium group. After 10 days, 78.8% of the pelargonium group was completely cured, vs. only 31.4% of the placebo group.1

*Pelargonium sidoides* is considered to have antibacterial, antiviral, and expectorant properties. This triple action attacks the acute infection at its root, and strengthens the immune system, helping to prevent re-infection. Due to its bacteria-killing and immune modulating characteristics, pelargonium is the perfect choice when treating the cold, flu, and other respiratory illnesses, which are astoundingly common each year.

In fact, Americans suffer over 500 million colds every year, which costs about $40 billion dollars annually. And medical treatment, which accounts for 45% of the money spent, isn’t even half of the cost. About 55% is due to indirect costs, such as missed work days. Aside from that, another $3 billion dollars is spent every year on over-the-counter (OTC) medications that do little good and in some cases, much harm. In Germany, where botanical medicine is mainstream, pelargonium is immensely popular, and typically outsells conventional OTC drugs. It has been clinically studied and proven to reduce the severity and shorten the duration of colds and flu, without the side effects so commonly experienced with drugs. I believe that pelargonium root can have a huge impact on keeping you healthy and your immune system strong.

The second herb in this combination is a clinically proven, standardized extract derived from the plant *Andrographis paniculata*, commonly known as the “King of the bitters,” and widely used in Ayurvedic medicine. Andrographis helps prevent the common cold, and reduces the intensity of symptoms – particularly sore throat and runny nose. Two systematic reviews of available clinical studies have further highlighted these conclusions. Andrographis has been shown to possess immune-stimulant and anti-inflammatory activities in scientific studies. In a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, this standardized andrographis extract I recommend was administered to 223 adults with uncomplicated upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs). There was a significant decrease in the symptoms of URTI compared to the placebo group. None of the studies indicate any serious adverse side effects. In addition, andrographis has a long traditional-use history, with no safety issues reported.

The third herb I recommend in this combination is *Echinacea purpurea*.

Echinacea has been well-known as an immune-booster for generations. Again and again, studies find that this herbal extract reduces the length and severity of colds, and helps people get back on track much faster.

The compounds in Echinacea that are considered most responsible for this are polysaccharides and glycoproteins that stimulate the immune system. This makes Echinacea especially useful when taken at the very beginning of a cold or flu, when the body needs to marshal its strength against the virus.

In a recent randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial, an Echinacea extract was tested over a 4-month period. Participants recorded and rated cold-related issues in a diary throughout the investigation period.2 Additionally, nasal secretions were sampled at acute colds and screened for viruses. The results were impressive: Echinacea not only reduced the total number of cold episodes, but also the cumulative total of cold episode days within the treatment group, and the total number of occasions of pain-killer use to relieve other symptoms. It was shown to inhibit virally confirmed colds and prevented viral infections.

Another recent review of complementary treatments for colds and flus found that *Echinacea purpurea* was consistently the most effective choice. The researchers found that symptom severity was reduced in 4 out of 6 trials, and that of the 4 trials that measured the duration of cold symptoms, the reduction was significant – in some cases by 3 or 4 days!3

If I were to come down with a cold or flu, the combination of pelargonium root, andrographis, and echinacea would be my choice to relieve symptoms and help me recover much faster. It is my favorite combination to boost my immune system and help assure a healthy upper respiratory tract. This triple action combination can be used when you start to become ill, or it can be used long term as a preventative, especially during cold and flu season, to give your body the extra immune strengthening it needs.

**REFERENCES:**


When in doubt, always consult your physician or health care practitioner. This column is to provide you with information to maintain your health.

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