Compounds in echinacea 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. The results were impressive: echinacea not only reduced the total number of cold episodes, but also cut the cumulative total of cold episode days within the treatment group, and the total number of occasions pain-killers were used to relieve other symptoms. It was also shown to inhibit colds and prevent viral infections.

Another 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 in the 4 trials that measured the duration of cold symptoms, the reduction was significant – in some cases by 3 or 4 days!

In fact, in an earlier clinical trial, 60 individuals started the herb or a placebo at the first sign of a cold – in more than half of the echinacea group, it never went further than that. For those who did become ill, their duration of symptoms was much shorter than the symptom length in the placebo group.

Winter is typically the time when our immune system is most challenged, and when we are probably the most likely to catch a cold or the flu. And, when we do get sick, most of us just want to get well fast. Or even better, not get sick in the first place! I recommend a combination of proven cold-fighting, immune-boosting herbs that:

- Stops colds and flu from taking hold
- Destroys bacteria and viruses
- Prevents dangerous secondary infections
- Shortens the duration of respiratory infections
- Lessens symptom severity
- Is safe and effective for adults and children alike
- Helps you feel better faster – without adverse side effects!

**HERE IS MY SUGGESTION:**

If you are looking to stop colds and flu, I recommend taking 275 mg of the following combination: standardized extracts of echinacea, andrographis, and pelargonium three times daily.
The echinacea I recommend is a preparation of the dried juice of the freshly pressed plant. It is incredibly effective, especially when combined in its clinical strength levels with andrographis and pelargonium.

**Andrographis**
The second herb in the combination I recommend 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 – and research backs it up.

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, andrographis relieved the intensity of key symptoms in just two days, including fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, and the sleeplessness that accompanies a cold. By the fourth day, a significant decrease in all symptoms was seen, which also included headache, earache, phlegm production, and the frequency and intensity of coughing spells.

Another clinical study of individuals with upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) showed similar results. In this case, 223 patients either received andrographis or a placebo. At first, the results between the two seemed about the same. But by the third day, there was a dramatic difference in cough, headache, sore throat, and disturbed sleep. People in the placebo group noticed no improvement – in fact, some symptoms got worse – while those in the andrographis group saw a major improvement in only five days. The fact that andrographis shows no side effects makes it even better.

**Pelargonium**
The third herb I recommend in this combination is the root of *Pelargonium sidoides* (also known as umckaloabo). This herb traditionally was used by the Zulu people in South Africa 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.

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 or a placebo. After 5 days, the reduction of symptoms was almost double in the pelargonium group. After 10 days, 78.8 percent of the pelargonium group was completely cured vs. only 31.4 percent of the placebo group.

Pelargonium has antibacterial, antiviral, and expectorant properties, which attacks acute infections at their roots, strengthens the immune system, and prevents reinfection. Due to its bacteria-killing and immune-modulating characteristics, pelargonium is the perfect choice when treating colds, flu, and other respiratory illnesses, which are astoundingly common each year.

In Germany, 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.