



Dr. Frank,

I saw your article in the Villager when I was skiing last week and thought I would pick your brain. It's that time of year again when everyone here seems to have the flu. I have read all sorts of articles about how to prevent getting the flu or a cold, but there is a lot of conflicting information out there. I was wondering what you use to prevent colds and flu. Can you also talk about remedies for runny noses, coughing and anything for bronchitis?  
S.S. Buffalo

Even down here in Florida we are experiencing a run of viral illness which causes the flu and bacterial conditions like bronchitis and the common cold. Bronchitis can also be a secondary condition to the flu. They all seem to start with a slightly sore throat caused by post nasal drip for 3-4 days followed by one or all of the following: sore throat, runny nose, headache, body aches and general malaise. A flu or cold can last for up to 10 days but complications such as bronchitis which is a bacterial infection of the bronchial tubes can last for an indefinite period of time. If you suspect that you have bronchitis see your physician.

One of the main ways that viruses travel is on airplanes like we do! The virus leaves a human carrier and is circulated in the ventilation system of the plane. The air conditioning system of the planes dries out the mucus membranes of our nose causing them to actually crack open! The virus enters our bodies through these cracks and then we are the new carrier. To avoid this add one to two drops each of oregano, rosemary and thyme essential oils to one ounce of a carrier oil like jojoba, grape seed or olive oil. Keep it in a bottle with a good seal so it does not leak. Carry it on the plane with you and use it to lightly coat your nasal passages. This way they cannot crack and the essential oils are very anti-viral and anti-bacterial! If you do get sick make sure to get plenty of rest, and drink plenty of fluids. Dehydration has been shown to lower the immune response. The foods you eat can have a positive impact on your health as well. Probably the most anti-viral and anti-biotic food out there is pesto sauce. The garlic, basil and parsley all contain essential oils that kill pathogenic organisms. Oregano, rosemary, thyme, ginger, shitake mushrooms, scallions and tangerine peels all have the ability to kill viruses and bacteria. Chicken soup is one of the legendary foods for colds and elderberry syrup can kill viruses. Avoid sugar, dairy, alcohol and processed foods.

Supplements such as lactobacillus supplements and andrographis can actually help prevent colds and flu. The lactobacillus kills bacteria in our body. I prefer andrographis to popular remedies such as echinacea because while andrographis has fared well in research, echinacea has not. Research has also shown andrographis to shorten the duration of a cold when 500mg is taken 3 times a day. Anrographis comes from Chinese herbal medicine where it is called Chuan Xin Lan. Chinese herbal medicine has gained a lot of respect from the medical community because the

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proven themselves in research. There are simple teas which you can make to help lessen your cold and flu symptoms. Uncooked ginger slices and brown sugar to taste when steeped 5 minutes in hot water can promote sweating, reduce fever, headache and coughing. Perilla which is Bai Zhi in Chinese and Dahurian angelica botanically when combined with uncooked ginger is also good for treatment and prevention of colds. Scallion and ginger made into a tea is good for colds and flu with nasal congestion. Try this tea while sitting in a hot bath. Go to bed immediately after the bath and sweat your cold out!. A tea made from tangerine peels and green tea is very good for bronchitis as is a tea made from mint and ginger. For nasal congestion I use a tea or alcohol extract of elder flower. This moves the lymph in the upper part of the body and it tastes good as well. Irrigation of your sinuses with salt water will help you recover faster. Use a special device to do this like a neti pot or a nasaline as sucking the water up your nose from your hand or a cup just makes things worse not better. Lastly, a simple herb tea of linden flowers, astragalus herb, catnip, elder flower and mint can be sipped all day to give comfort and speed recovery. Try taking andrographis as a preventative and you might not get sick at all this year!

Yours in Health,  
Dr. Ervolino

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