

## Cold Busters: Herbs for the Winter Season

With the winter around the corner, so is congestion and sore throats, the cold virus thrives in lower temperatures and can set in when our defenses are low. For individuals with HIV and AIDS, the concern of catching a cold is increased with the potential for it to progress to bronchitis or Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP) pneumonia. Raising the bodies' natural defenses can decrease the likelihood of catching an infection.

**Support a Fever:** a fever is the first line of immune system defense, meaning the immune system uses heat to attack foreign pathogens and to mobilize its army of immune system troops to fight against viruses and bacteria. At the onset of a cold, don't suppress a fever, (the increased heat in the body is a sign that the body is attempting to fight infection); instead, allow it to run its course and watch that the fever does not exceed 103°F- 104°F.

Increased sweating accompanies a rise in body temperature. A cold can be an opportunity to remove wastes and expel toxins thru the pores of the skin, diaphoretic herbs such as Ginger, Peppermint and Elderflowers assist in this process.

Traditional Cold remedy

Grated ginger

Green onion

Lemon

Cayenne pepper powder

Boil 2 cups of water. Grate 1-2 tsp of fresh ginger and chop 3-4 green onions, add to water, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Add a squeeze of lemon and a dash of cayenne pepper. Sweeten with a bit of honey if needed. Drink 2-4 cups daily.

Epsom salt baths used at the onset of a cold can also encourage elimination of wastes through the skin, improve circulation, support lymphatic drainage and are welcome relief for whole body aches and chills. Draw a hot bath and add 2-4 cups of epsom salts. Stay in the water for about 15 minutes. Get out of the bath slowly, (you might feel dizzy) and go straight to bed. If whole body soaks are not possible then footbaths are also effective.

**A Sore Throat:** Visit your kitchen spices, the cooking herbs sage, thyme and rosemary are all anti viral, antiseptic and their astringent nature is ideal treatment for laryngitis and a sore throat. For the strongest medicinal effect, ensure the bulk herbs have a strong characteristic scent and have been stored for less than 1 year. Use 1 tsp herb mixture per 1 cup of boiling water. Cover and steep for 15 minutes. Strain and use as a gargle.

My favorite herbal ammunition for winter viruses and bacteria include:

Elderflowers (*Sambucus nigra*) used for all upper respiratory infections, sinus headaches, promotes sweating and can help break a fever, high in vitamin C, this herb is ideal for chills and nasal congestion.

Wild Indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*) a powerful antiseptic for viral and bacterial infections also used for fevers, a sore throat and laryngitis.

Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) an expectorant and respiratory tonic for bronchitis and for soothing inflamed mucous membranes.

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) An anti viral, anti bacterial, anti fungal and anti cough remedy,

thyme helps to liquefy and loosen mucous from the lungs and is an expectorant for a dry spastic cough.

**Standard Adult Dosages**

Dried herb: 1 tsp of herb per 1 cup hot water. Steep 15 minutes. Drink 3-4 cups daily as a tea.  
Liquid Tincture: 5 ml taken 3-4 times daily diluted in hot water.

**Cold Buster Tips:**

- Increase fluids (water, herbal teas and broth) to 6-8 cups daily
- Ensure you are getting fresh air, keep a window open in your home for circulation of fresh air
- Increase intake of Vitamin C and Bioflavonoids
- Wash hands often as the cold virus can survive on the hands, tissues and other surfaces for several hours
- Increase consumption of garlic and onions and avoid mucous-forming foods such as sugar, dairy and processed foods.

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