Seven natural ways to beat the flu

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The peak of flu activity can vary from year to year, but this year’s flu season began earlier than what is typical, and it is estimated to continue its high activity into May.

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Immune System Improvements Are a Must If You Don’t Want a Flu Shot

Some people choose not to get a flu shot and do just fine during the flu season. Have you ever wondered why?

More than likely it’s because they have a strong immune system, and they may be implementing some natural preventive therapies that can knock out the flu virus before it becomes a problem.

And you can benefit from these same therapies.

Before we go over some of the most effective natural flu fighters, don’t forget about the power of good hand hygiene – it’s probably the most effective way that you can naturally reduce your risk of getting the flu. Whenever someone near you coughs or sneezes, you’re exposed to respiratory droplets that may carry the flu. You can pick up the flu directly by breathing in these droplets.

Or, more often the droplets settle on a surface, you touch the surface, and then you touch your mouth or nose, and the flu enters your system through that route. So be careful out there. Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. It’s easy to do, and it’s free. Don’t use hand sanitizers! Most of them are alcohol based and have been known to cause problems, but that’s another story.

Now let’s take a look at what you can do to get your immune system in fighting form:

Echinacea is a type of plant in the daisy family, has been shown to boost the immune system by activating your white blood cells. It also increases interferon production which can specifically help fight off viral infections, including the flu. One study showed that an Echinacea compound herbal tea was effective for the relief of flu symptoms if taken at the earliest onset. Evidence also shows that if you take Echinacea about a week before being exposed to the flu virus, you may prevent yourself from getting sick.

Zinc is an essential mineral and has a role in multiple biochemical processes. It is found in a variety of foods, such as poultry, red meat, dairy products, whole grains, nuts, beans, and some types of seafood. Your body has no specialized storage system for zinc, so it needs it on a daily basis either from your diet or from a supplement.

Medical evidence suggests that zinc lozenges can shorten the duration of flu symptoms, such as cough, sore throat, and nasal drainage. It may also have some preventive benefits against developing a respiratory viral infection, such as the flu, in the first place. The average recommended dose is 15-25 mg per day but not more since too much zinc can actually worsen your immunity.

Garlic has been used to help prevent some illnesses for centuries. It has powerful antioxidant effects, which can help to stabilize your cells and your DNA. By doing so, it can actually improve your immunity.

Aged garlic extract has been shown to be helpful in preventing the flu and reducing the recovery period (by about a day), according to one medical study. However, it may not be as good at treating flu symptoms once the infection occurs. Be careful about taking it if you are taking any blood-thinning medications (including aspirin) since garlic has blood-thinning properties and can increase your risk for bleeding problems. Of course, check with your doctor for your
best advice.

**Vitamin C.** Medical literature suggests that taking 1000-2000 mg of vitamin C daily on a consistent basis, rather than as needed, can help shorten the duration and severity of upper respiratory infections in general.

**Ginseng / Cold-Fx.** Cold-Fx is a proprietary extract of the roots of North American ginseng and has been shown in studies to prevent respiratory infections. One study showed that when seniors with good immune systems take Cold-Fx, it helps to reduce the risk of respiratory infections by 48% and can reduce their duration by 55%. It was also found to be a safe natural therapy.

**Essential Oils.** The combination of 3 essential oils – eucalyptus, alpha-pinene from pine, and d-limonene from citrus – has been shown to be helpful in treating acute and chronic inflammation of the lungs, and so may be promising in helping you to fight off the flu. This combination comes in oral form and is recommended to be taken at a dose of 300 mg, three to four times daily.

**Probiotics.** Probiotics ("pro-life") are bacteria that are good for you. Scientific evidence shows that this type of bacteria can improve your immune system by increasing certain T cells, which can fight off infection, or by helping to reverse some vitamin deficiencies. You can find probiotics in cultured dairy products – like kefir or yogurt. They are also available in different types of oral supplements.

One clinical study showed that a probiotic bacteria, *Lactobacillus fermentum*, helped to improve the effectiveness of the flu vaccines. Other studies have shown probiotic benefits, when taken with multivitamins and minerals, in helping to improve the duration and severity of flu symptoms. It's also essential to take a course of probiotics following any antibiotic treatment. After a course of antibiotics you are especially vulnerable to the flu and other illnesses – probiotics can help protect you.

Another great supplement to help strengthen and bolster your immune system is a product from Enriching Gifts called **Sterol Max.** This is one of our essential "medicine cabinet" items.

**About Enrich Gifts**

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