



Colds and Flu

- Everyone gets a cold once in awhile. Colds usually last between 3-5 days with full recovery within a week. The “flu” caused by influenza is usually more severe and lasts anywhere from 5 days to 3 weeks. Other viruses can cause flu-like symptoms including vomiting and diarrhea but these are not caused by influenza. While symptoms of colds and flus can vary, some treatment options are common to both.
 - **Get lots of rest.** If you can, take a couple of days off from work or school and devote that time to rest. Sleep allows the body to repair and replenish. It is usually the case that devoting 2-3 days to recovery will shorten the time of illness.
 - **Drink non-sugared fluids.** When we are sick, we need plenty of fluids. However, drinking juices and other sugared drinks can temporarily weaken our immune system. Just 1 tsp. of sugar can impair our immune system’s ability to “engulf” bacteria and viruses for up to 4 hours. Drink mostly water. If you’re appetite is decreased, try soups and other light meals. Juice can be a wonderful comfort when we’re sick, but don’t rely on it for fluids. Dilute juice with at least ½ water.
 - **Kitchen Wisdom.** Many of these common items in our kitchens can help us when we’re sick.
 - **Salt.** Gargle with salt water at the first sign of a sore throat. Add ½ tsp to ½ cup of warm water and gargle for 15-20 seconds. Repeat 3-4 times/day as needed.
 - **Garlic.** Garlic is one of nature’s most powerful weapons. Many studies have shown that it has anti-bacterial and anti-viral activity. Garlic can be used in soups, stir-frys and as a tea (See “tea” below). When you’re sick, try to consume 3-4 fresh cloves/day.
 - **Ginger.** Ginger is a very warming herb and has been used to treat colds for centuries. Ginger is also an anti-inflammatory so can decrease inflammation that often accompanies viral infections
 - **Honey.** Honey is very soothing to a sore throat. Adding a little bit of honey to herbal tea can be very useful
 - **Cayenne.** Cayenne is another warming herb that can help the body to fight off viral infections.
 - **TEA:**

3 cups of water	3 cloves of fresh garlic (pressed)
2 Tbsp of fresh grated ginger	1 tsp cayenne pepper
 - **Herbs.** Herbs are very powerful medicines and can be used very effectively in treating various illnesses. There are literally dozens of herbs that can be used to treat colds and flus. Taking a single herb (i.e. Echinacea) can help, but they are most effective when herbal combinations are individualized for specific symptoms.
- **A note on fever.** Most of us have had a fever at one point in our lives. Many people are afraid of fevers and will try to lower the fever immediately. But many of us don’t realize that fevers are not a symptom of illness, they are our body’s response to illness and a critical part of the healing process. The raised body temperature is a sign that our immune system has identified the infection and is working hard to fight it. We can help by supporting the fever with rest and fluids. Fevers don’t pose a danger unless they are above 103-104 F. Monitor your temperature every hour. Most fevers will “break” which is usually accompanied by profuse sweating followed by an improvement of symptoms.