

Posted 12 July 2009

# Flu

## What is the flu?

The flu, or influenza, starts with a virus that causes a respiratory illness. Flu symptoms include a high fever, chills, and dry cough, sore throat, and muscle aches. Young children and the elderly are particularly susceptible to flu and resulting complications.

## Transmission

Influenza can be transmitted through the air by coughing and sneezing. It can also be caught through touch.

## Prevention

There are simple means of helping to prevent getting the flu and helping to prevent spreading the flu if you come down with it. Always cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough. This will help keep airborne transmission of the flu virus down. Wash your hands frequently. Try to remember not to touch your eyes, mouth, or nose. If you are sick with the flu, do not push it. Stay home.

The best way to avoid seasonal colds and influenza is to strengthen your immune system with regular exercise, a balanced diet of nutritious whole foods, an adequate amount of sleep, and a minimum of stress.

## Simple Home remedies for the flu

### Garlic

Garlic is one of the best infection fighters available for both bacterial and viral infections. It is a natural antibiotic that does not appear to create resistant bacteria strains. In addition, fresh garlic extract has been shown to be veridical to many viruses.

Garlic possesses the ability to stimulate the immune system. It can stimulate the activity of the macrophages (white blood cells).

Garlic may be particularly effective in treating upper respiratory viral infections due to its immune-enhancing properties and its ability to clear mucous from the lungs.

It destroys and inhibits various bacteria and fungi. Garlic is effective against strep, staph, and even anthrax bacteria.

#### To soothe a sore throat

Gargle twice daily with a solution of six pressed garlic cloves mixed into a glass of warm (not hot) water. Follow the regimen for 3 days. A recent study shows that fresh garlic juice has antimicrobial properties that fight pain-causing bacteria. The warm liquid soothes inflamed tissue.

### Onion

Everything that's been said about Garlic can be said about onion. Onions (along with garlic, leeks, shallots and chives) contain allicin -- nature's own penicillin. Besides fighting both bacteria *and* viruses.

### **Onion Tea for Bronchitis**

Boil 2 small onions with the skin on for 15 minutes in 1 liter of water with 100 grams of raw sugar and 5 cloves. Steep for 20 minutes, strain and drink 2 to 3 cups daily.

## **Ginger**

Ginger has been traditionally used to treat colds and flu. Chinese studies have shown that ginger helps kill influenza viruses and an Indian report shows that it increases the immune system's ability to fight infection.

### **Ginger Tea Recipe**

4 cups of water  
5 cm piece of fresh ginger root  
Pinch of cayenne pepper  
optional: honey and lemon

Peel the ginger root and slice it into thin slices. Bring the water to a boil in a saucepan. Once it is boiling, add the ginger. Cover it and reduce to a simmer for 15-20 minutes. Strain the tea. Add honey and lemon to taste.

## **Elderberry**

This herb is known to support the immune system and to stimulate the body's ability to fight viruses. Elderberries have been used in medicine since the Fifth Century, for treating the flu and ill effects of the chills. Studies conducted on elderberries show a reduction of flu symptoms. This included a reduction of fever, muscle ache, pain and coughing.

### **Elderberry Tea recipe**

Infuse one teaspoon of the herb with one cup of boiling water. Steep for 5-10 minutes and strain.

Drink two to three cups daily.

### **Herbal Fever Remedy with Elder Flowers**

1 teaspoon dried Elder Flowers  
1 teaspoon dried Peppermint Leaves  
1 teaspoon Yarrow leaves  
500 ml water

Mix the herbs. Place in a saucepan. Pour 500 ml boiling water over it. Cover and allow to steep in a hot place for 10 to 15 minutes (do not boil). When ready, strain into another saucepan. Sweeten with honey if desired.

This remedy drops high temperature associated with flu quite effectively.

## **Fennel**

Due to its mucus-dissolving properties, fennel tea is often used as an expectorant for the treatment of whooping cough, asthma, bronchitis and other upper respiratory infections. It can also be used as a gargle for a sore throat.

### **For asthma and whooping cough**

- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon anise seeds
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)

Mix the herbs. Place in a saucepan. Pour 500 ml boiling water over it. Cover and allow to steep in a hot place for 10 to 15 minutes (do not boil). When ready, strain into another saucepan. Sweeten with honey if desired.

During the flu, drinking lots of liquids will help to loosen up the mucus and make coughing it up much easier. Warm liquids (such as herbal teas) or filtered water are best for this purpose.

Avoid dairy products, as they increase the body's tendency to form mucus.

Fresh fruit and vegetable juices may help speed recovery, as they are concentrated sources of nutrients.

And once again the best medicine of flu is prevention.