

Battling Colds & Flu This Winter A Guide



The rains are around the corner and once it starts raining, the weather will get very cold in the UK. Many people will want to go out of the country to warmer places until spring. Those advertisements of Italian Yoga hideaways are sure to be tempting for many.

The cold winter also brings with it the increased risk of contracting respiratory infections like cold, cough and flu. There are many reasons for this. During winter, people tend to stay indoors and this makes it easy for airborne infections to spread from one person to another. That is why it is easy to catch the dreaded office or shop-floor flu.

The Vitamin D Factor

Although there is no denying the fact that cold weather adversely affects the body's immune system, it is also interesting to note that the cold weather is not directly responsible for colds. There is also a general belief that the higher possibility of getting a cold in winter is a myth. Conclusive evidence is available to show that the lack of adequate exposure to sunlight in winters weakens the body's immune system. This is due to the deficiency of [Vitamin D](#), which is vital for the normal functioning of the immune system.

Vitamin D is synthesised in the skin when it is exposed to strong sunlight. People, especially those living in northern latitudes, often suffer from Vitamin D deficiency during the colder months. The other factor is the cold air, which makes it much harder for the mucous lining in the respiratory tract to trap and neutralize disease causing germs. Products containing Vitamin

D should, therefore, be the number one winter remedy product on the shelves.

Besides Vitamin D, there are other effective natural products that are of great help to people during the winter months. They can be divided into two groups. The first group of products is like Vitamin D. They reduce a person's chances of getting the flu. The second group of products is useful when someone contracts the flu. These products help reduce the severity of the flu and speed up recovery.

Sticking to an antioxidant-rich balanced diet throughout the year is the best preventive measure against winter ailments. Research has shown that curries, which are rich in ingredients such as garlic, chillies and turmeric, boost immunity. Nutritionists also recommend fruits like oranges, pawpaw and pineapple as a defence against colds and flu. These fruits contain Vitamin C, which is well known for its cold and flu fighting ability.

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Supplements

Food quality has deteriorated over the years due to the use of toxic pesticides, artificial fertilizers and other chemicals. This makes it advisable to use Vitamin C supplements for added protection. Elderberry is also a very effective preventive remedy during the cold months. It contains large amounts of anthocyanins, which helps prevent tissue damage. Healthy tissues can fight germs and also prevent oxidative damage.

Other than vegetables, fruits and plant based antioxidants, there is another immune system enhancer that can elude the attention of even the shrewdest customers.



Yeast helps build the body's immune system, but it is not easily available in the diet. It contains complex sugars known as beta-1, 3 & beta-1, 6-glucans. Unfortunately, these compounds are easily destroyed by modern farming and food processing techniques. [Glucans](#) strengthen the immune system and this improves the body's defence against germs. It is a good idea to use a supplement that contains 125 to 250 mg of beta-1, 3 & beta-1, 6-glucans.

[Selenium](#) is another substance that enhances the body's defences against bacteria and viruses. Unfortunately, foods taken by most Europeans are deficient in selenium. As a result, the body's defence mechanisms that depend on it do not function properly.

The symptoms of cold and flu like runny nose and sneezing cause a lot of discomfort. Zinc is a very effective remedy to relieve these symptoms. Research has shown that zinc can drastically reduce the duration of common cold. Zinc can be taken either as a lozenge or as a medicine for internal use. It works faster and more efficiently on the respiratory tract if taken as a lozenge.

The glutonate form of zinc is best for lozenges. A lozenge can be taken every two hours (maximum six a day). It should not be taken on an empty stomach.

Zinc sulphate can cause a stomach upset. For internal use, it's best to take zinc picolinate or zinc citrate. A 15 to 17 mg capsule or tablet can be taken once in a day.

A cup of hot [herbal tea](#) does make people feel better during a cold or flu, but studies have shown that the effects are mostly psychological. For speedy recovery, it is important to take plenty of fluids and get adequate bed rest.

[View all our supplements, vitamins and minerals](#)

Combinations That Work Best For Cold

There are a number of effective natural remedies for cold and flu. Many brands of clinical drugs that combine the most effective ingredients from these remedies are available in pharmacies. For example, [InfluZinc and C Lozenges](#) contain zinc fortified with Vitamin C obtained from Acerola cherry. This cherry contains large amounts of Vitamin C, about 30 times the amount present in oranges. Some companies have managed to blend plant extracts such as elderberry and goldenseal extracts with nutrients like selenium and Vitamin A. They are available as tablets.



It is also a good idea to stock some of the increasingly popular natural sanitizers available in the market. A single sneeze releases thousands of bacteria and virus particles into the air. Moisturising hand sanitizers and products like Quash, which contains aloe vera and manuka honey may give retailers good opportunities for shrewd cross selling.

A Taste Of Honey

While cough remedies may be popular at local drugstores, it may not be so in many places around the globe. The use of commonly available cough syrups has been heavily criticized. There is no compelling evidence to support cough remedies. There is also no proof that they reduce the duration of the illness. Coughing is a natural process of curing cold. Although it is uncomfortable, coughing can effectively clear the mucus out of the airways and speed up the recovery process.



Lemon drinks and hot honey are good alternatives for cough syrups. Health stores can really benefit from this. They can sell the increasingly popular [manuka honey](#) as a safe cough soothing agent with additional health benefits.

The effectiveness of honey for cough relief is scientifically established. In a study on children above the age of two suffering from respiratory tract infections, up to 10 ml of honey was given at bedtime. It was observed that the soothing effect of the honey seemed to provide relief from coughs and as a result, the children seemed to sleep better.

Products like [Comvita Propolis Herbal Elixir](#) are promoting the benefits of honey. A mixture of tea tree oil and manuka honey provides relief from cold.

[View our entire honey range of products](#)

A Shop With A View

The time during the year when people prepare for the cold months depends on their level of knowledge. Those who know that they have to reinforce their immune system for the coming winter start preparations immediately after summer.

Many people prefer to take [Echinacea](#) (by A Vogel) with products containing high levels of [Vitamin C](#) and [Zinc](#) (usually Viridian products). These days, many people are also realising that they can boost their immunity by taking [Vitamin B](#) compounds and then, as the winter progresses, they can use fresh products like ginger and [honey](#). [Bee pollen](#) is another option and an excellent source of essential vitamins, minerals, amino acids and enzymes.

Citricidal, which is extracted from the seeds of grapefruits, is popular among people who are aware of its benefits. Some people are put off by its strong taste. It can be mixed with water, but it is best to take it along with another substance that has an equally strong taste.

Sage is a popular remedy that comes either as a tincture or a throat spray. The throat spray is useful when the person is already down with cold or flu. It helps relieve sore throat and some musicians can't do without it.

Natural beauty products are popular and people buy them throughout the year. In winter, the demand for skin oils go up as almost everyone experiences dry skin.

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Things To Stock

Sambucol Original

Original Berry goodness all year round! [Sambucol Original](#) is a great tasting liquid containing Black Elderberries. It is packed with flavonoids, naturally occurring antioxidants with high ORAC value. ORAC value is a method of measuring the antioxidant capacity of different foods and supplements. Each bottle of Sambucol contains up to 1000 Black Elderberries and is free from artificial flavours. Sambucol contains AntiVirin™.



Taking The Fresh Approach

[Fresh Freeze Dried Beetroot Juice, Cordyceps & Reishi Super-blend Powder](#) offers all-round winter protection. Additionally, it contains the goodness of medicinal mushrooms, which helps keep people in top shape throughout the UK winter.



Ain't Nothing But a D Thang

[Vitamin D3](#) stimulates the production of anti-bacterial and anti-viral proteins and enhances the body's immunity against winter ailments. Vitamin D3 dissolved in oil for easy absorption is available as small pearly capsules, which are very easy to take.



Cold Busting Citrus

[Citricidal liquid](#), sold as a natural cleanse, is a powerful and easy to use supplement. It is obtained from the seeds of grapefruits and is vital for staying healthy through the harsh winters.



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