



# Health & Wellness Monthly Newsletter

## Cold or Flu? What to do?

Tried-and-true home remedies can help you feel better when you find yourself “under the weather” with a cold or the flu. And a few over-the-counter medications can help relieve nasty symptoms.

The first question is; do you have a cold or the flu? Chances are, if you had a flu shot, you don’t have influenza. You can still get vaccinated to protect yourself the rest of the flu season, which runs through April, according to the CDC.

The symptoms are confusing, but here’s a simple test: People with the flu get sick more suddenly, look much sicker, and feel sick all over. High fevers, body aches, extreme fatigue and dry cough are also more likely to be flu, according to experts at eMedicineHealth. The common cold generally consists of; a runny or stuffy nose, a slight fever, and coughing.

In either case, antibiotics are not the cure. In fact, taking these prescription medications weakens their effectiveness for when you really need them. Colds and flu are caused by viruses. Antibiotics cannot fight viruses. So reserve them for bacterial infections, and your doctor is the best judge of that.

Often, what you need to ease the symptoms of colds and flu can be found right at home – where you should be so you aren’t coughing and sneezing and infecting others. Mary Windle, PharmD, Pharmacy Editor of eMedicine, Inc., and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Pharmacy, offers this prescription to feel better fast:

### For chest congestion:

- Drink plenty of fluids (8 to 10 cups a day) such as water, sports drinks, herbal teas, fruit drinks, or ginger ale. Fluids help break up congestion, prevent dehydration and keep your throat moist.
- Inhaled steam can ease congestion too. Create steam with a humidifier, or steam up the bathroom by running a hot shower.

### For nasal congestion:

- Relieve clogged nasal and sinus passages caused by excessive mucus with either decongestant pills or with a nasal spray. These are best taken following a hot shower and lots of nose blowing to clear out the mucus as much as possible.

### For fever and pain, body aches and tiredness:

- Rest in bed.
- Over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) can help decrease fever and ease sore throat pain and body aches.

### For cough:

- For a dry hacking cough, you may choose a medication that contains a cough suppressant – Look for over-the-counter medications that contain dextromethorphan.
- For a cough that produces excessive mucus, or phlegm, you may want to use an expectorant that loosens phlegm. Guaifenesin is the most common active ingredient.

### For sore throat:

- A warm salt-water gargle can relieve a scratchy throat.
- Lozenges, mouthwashes, and sprays that contain a numbing ingredient can ease the pain.

Source: Consumer Health News



# Hand Washing - The First Line of Defense Against Germs

**CINNAMON:** helps soothe mild gastrointestinal conditions such as bloating

**GARLIC:** may reduce the risk of heart disease by decreasing blood cholesterol, preventing clogged arteries, and lowering blood pressure; it also may reduce cancer risk.

**GINGER:** quells nausea and vomiting caused by motion sickness or digestive problems.

**FENNEL SEED:** offers relief from gas, mild GI cramping and just feeling stuffed—thus the seeds offered at the end of Indian meals.

## Healthy Herbs and Spices

**A dash of rosemary. A hint of mint. A sprig of basil. Common herbs and spices used to make foods taste good might also be good for you.**

Although most people use herbs and spices, many are unaware that these plant foods are also powerful sources of antioxidants that may have disease fighting capabilities, according to the results of a recent national survey conducted by an independent polling organization and sponsored by Gourmet Garden.

“While we’ve known for a long time that fruits and vegetables and other plant foods are high in antioxidants, herbs and spices have been overlooked as a potentially powerful source of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals,” said Dr. David Heber, Director, UCLA Center for Human Nutrition.

New research that studied the antioxidant concentration in more than 1,000 foods and beverages commonly consumed in the US shows that herbs and spices are actually higher in antioxidant capacity compared to many fruits and vegetables on an ounce-per-ounce basis. The study, by a collaboration of Norwegian and US scientists, reported that cloves have the highest antioxidant content followed by oregano, ginger, cinnamon and turmeric.

“Emerging research suggests that herbs and spices may aid in the prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer, and the high levels of antioxidants and phytonutrients found in herbs and spices may boost the antioxidant properties of other healthy foods as well,” said Dr. Heber. In fact, one study found that adding herbs and spices increased the antioxidant capacity of the meal by 200%.

Sources  
Consumer Health News  
Natural Health

**Germs - such as bacteria and viruses - can be transmitted several different ways, especially through personal contact, touching door knobs and other surfaces, or using the bathroom.**

Other ways germs spread include:

- through contaminated water and food
- through droplets released during a cough or a sneeze

If you pick up germs from one of these sources, you can unknowingly become infected simply by touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Good hand washing fights the spread of many illnesses - and not just the common cold. More serious illnesses such as meningitis, bronchitis, influenza, hepatitis A, and most types of infectious diarrhea can be stopped with the simple act of washing your hands.

### When to Wash Your Hands

- Before and after preparing or serving food (especially careful to wash before and after preparing poultry, raw eggs, meat, or seafood)
- After:
  - Eating or snacking.
  - Handling money.
  - Touching your ears, nose, or mouth.
  - Blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - Touching your pets.
  - Any kind of cleaning or hand contact dirty surfaces
  - Caring for someone who is sick or injured.
  - Taking out the garbage.
  - Using the bathroom.
  - Changing diapers.



### Proper hand-washing

- Use warm or hot water when possible.
- Wet your hands and wrists completely under the running water.
- Apply a small dab of liquid soap. If you use bar soap, rinse it off before you use it.
- Work up a good lather and wash all of the surfaces of your skin, including the wrist, palms, backs of your hands, fingers, and fingernails.
- Wash your hands for at least 15 to 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands thoroughly.
- Dry your hands.
- Use your paper towel to turn off the water after you have finished.

### Proper use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers — which don't require water — are an excellent alternative to hand washing, particularly when soap and water aren't available. They're actually more effective than soap and water in killing bacteria and viruses that cause disease. However, soap should be used if hands are visibly dirty.

### To use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply about 1/2 tsp of the product to the palm of your hand.
- Rub your hands together, covering all surfaces of your hands, until they're dry.

Sources:  
[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org) | [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)