

Home Remedies for the Common Cold

By Deborah Banker, MD

Besides being an ophthalmologist, I am a general practitioner. When I was practicing general medicine, people were so grateful when I gave them advice regarding what they could do at home to improve their health and the health of their families.

Although I recommend many alternative healing modalities, if the person is getting worse, has asthma or is running a high fever, always consult your doctor.

Colds are caused by viruses not susceptible to antibiotics. Thus, we must look at methods other than antibiotics to treat viruses.

Home Remedies

Hot packs: Boil a hot towel or wash cloth; drain out the excess water; put it in a plastic bag (usually double-bagged or a Zip-loc baggy); wrap the bag with a handkerchief (if the towel is small) or pillowcase (if the towel is rather large); and place it on the congested area. You can put this on the nose, chest, throat or sinuses. This will bring more warmth and circulation to the congested area. As the towel cools off, unwrap it so that it is still warm on the skin, but not so hot as to cause burning. Do this repeatedly. The towel usually cools off in about 15 minutes, so repeat the process every 15 minutes. This is a convenient remedy if you are on a trip, since you can usually find the towel, bag, hot water and pillowcase in a motel room.

Herbal tea: A combination of echinacea, peppermint and chamomile tea can be helpful. Make it strong; if it is too strong for a child, dilute the tea with rice milk, soy milk or almond milk. Echinacea boosts the immune system; peppermint dilates the bronchioles; and chamomile soothes the stomach and takes away congestion. This is a good first treatment in the early stages of a cold, and I usually recommend one cup 2-4 times per day.

Lemon rind, honey, lemon juice and water: Many people do not realize that most of the natural healing properties of lemon are in the rind. It is very high in essential oils. If you run your fingernail across the rind, you will see the oil appear. In *The Handbook of Aromatherapy*, Marcel Lavabre, a researcher in this field for over 15 years, lists lemon as a bactericidal and antiseptic. It also stimulates leukocytosis, the production of white blood cells necessary to fight infections.

Take lemon rind and boil it in 2-4 cups of water for 15 minutes. Save the water, then add the juice of the squeezed lemon to the water and add honey - about one tablespoon per cup as suits your palate. Drink the water while warm. Singers use this remedy all the time to reverse sore throats when they have to perform.

Steaming with essentials: If you have a steamer, it usually has a little trough or opening where the steam comes out. At the trough, you can put some essential oils such as eucalyptus; lemon (see above); lavender; peppermint; and geranium to be dispensed in the steam. Eucalyptus helps asthma, bronchitis, flu and sinusitis, and it breaks up mucus. Peppermint dilates the bronchioles and is an expectorant. Lavender also helps with asthma; bronchitis; catarrh; influenza; whooping cough; sinusitis; and throat infections. Geranium helps with tonsillitis and sore throats.

Honeygar European formula (preventative during cold season): Heat equal parts apple cider vinegar and honey in a stainless steel or enamel pot until it barely boils, then cool. Store in a glass container. Shake the mixture, and take accordingly: for an adult, one tablespoon; for children, one teaspoon in water per day.

Other well-known suggestions: Stop consumption of mucus-producing foods, particularly milk products. Drink lots of fluids like orange juice for vitamin C, and water. For nausea or an upset stomach, 7-Up or ginger ale may help settle the stomach. A saltwater gargle takes the swelling out of the throat. It is very important to keep one's body temperature below 104 degrees Fahrenheit with aspirin or Tylenol, and cool sponge baths. Having a body temperature above 104 degrees can cause seizures. Increase your vitamin C intake to 1,000-5,000mg per day. Salty potato chips are a natural decongestant, as is hot green tea, which dilates the bronchioles, and lemon.

Dr. Deborah Banker is an internationally known radio personality, lecturer and advocate of wholistic medicine. She received her medical degree from the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks, with additional training at the University of Minnesota and Trinity College Medical Center in Dublin, Ireland. She received specialized training in Ophthalmology at the University of Rochester, New York and the

University of California. She also studied under a surgical research fellowship at the Doheny Eye Institute and the University of California at Irvine, and has taken several classes at Emperor's College of Oriental Medicine, including acupuncture, herbology and the philosophy of oriental medicine.

Dr. Banker currently maintains a practice as an ophthalmologist and general practitioner in Malibu, California, with a special interest in electromagnetic therapy. Called a "modern Galileo" by the National Health Federation, Dr. Banker has worked for 20 years developing breakthroughs in regenerative medicine and anti-aging programs for the eyes, skin and body, using a noninvasive approach that combines Western orthoptics with ancient Oriental and wholistic medicine.



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