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## BLOG



## Five (Natural) Ways to Fight the Cold and Flu Season

BY [ABBY FAIRES](#) NOVEMBER 22, 2013 2:37 PM



The barren trees and cooler temperatures warn us that the runny noses and coughs are coming. Just in time, though, we've got a list of five herbal remedies to help keep the bugs away this winter. (*Note: Each of the herbs and spices listed below work well before and during sickness.*)

**1. OREGANO OIL** is a natural antibiotic that has long been used for infections, from digestive disorders to skin conditions.

**Use:** Oregano oil—which is more potent than the dried herb—comes in liquid concentrate and capsule forms that can be purchased at most natural food stores, including [Whole Foods](#). Mix it with water and swallow. When you feel the spicy notes hit your throat, you know it's working. Use one to three drops, three times a day, or take up to 600 milligrams in capsule form each day.

**2. GARLIC** contains calcium, potassium, and sulfur compounds, which can help wipe out bacteria and infection.

**Use:** Buy fresh, whole garlic cloves from your local market, go home, and cook just about anything you want—meats, soups, veggies—with it. But make sure you cut and crush the cloves before chopping them up and throwing them in the pan. This releases allicin, which is responsible for much of the antioxidant and anti-microbial effects of garlic.

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**3. CHAMOMILE** contains Vitamin A, which helps fight infection and maintains mucosal surfaces, and zinc, which is vital to immune system cell function.

**Use:** Brew chamomile tea by steeping two to three heaping tablespoons of dried chamomile flower heads in eight ounces of boiling water for 10 to 15 minutes. Drink the tea three to four times daily. Dried chamomile can be purchased from natural food stores with bulk herb sections, including [Vitamin Cottage](#).

**4. TURMERIC** is a powerful anti-inflammatory that helps the immune system ward off bacteria and infection. It's also a good source of manganese and potassium.

**Use:** Mix three teaspoons of powdered turmeric in warm water and drink at least once a day. Powdered turmeric can be bought in most health food stores, including [Alfalfa's Market](#). (**Insider tip:** *Alfalfa's organic juice bar will throw whole turmeric root into a veggie elixir.*)

**5. CAYENNE** truly is a super-spice. Capsaicin, the most active component in cayenne pepper, is anti-inflammatory, abundant in antioxidants, rich in Vitamin C, and high in beta-carotene—the active component of Vitamin A.

**Use:** Sub this livelier spice for black pepper. Start with just a tiny smidge of cayenne pepper, and gradually work your way up, sprinkling it on foods as they cook. Aim for about two teaspoons per day.

**Bonus: Immune-boosting Tea Recipe**

Combine 2-3 tablespoons of dried chamomile flowers, 1/2 teaspoon tumeric powder (be very careful not to spill, as tumeric stains easily), a dash of cayenne, and 1 tablespoon honey (adjust to taste). Combine dry ingredients with 4 ounces of boiled water. Add 4 ounces of warm almond milk. Stir, strain, and drink up to three times per day.

—Image courtesy of [Shutterstock](#)

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