

Move away from the hanky!

For most people, colds are things that occur with the monotonous regularity of tax returns, to be looked upon as the inevitable consequence of shorter days and colder nights. Furthermore, with the advent of a cold comes the inescapable dose of antibiotics.

For many unfortunates, these antibiotics then spell a certain brush with thrush or bowel upsets. Can't be helped, you say? Just the way it is? Well, maybe not. The body does not automatically fall prey to a stalking virus just because the winter is looming. For many people, a dose of flu or a bad cold, with its concomitant catarrhal clearance, is their body's way of breaking down and evacuating all the gunge that has built up over the summer months.

Making sure you don't overload your system with rich foods, too much alcohol and an overindulgence in fine cheeses will go a long way towards lessening the toxic load to be expelled in the pre-winter clear-out. Easing up on mucus-forming dairy intake will reduce catarrh at any time of the year; you will, however, get the bonus reward of less stuffy colds during the winter months.

You can help your body to cleanse in a more pain-free manner throughout the year by regularly drinking nettle tea and including ginger in your diet. Ginger is a wonderful blood tonic, warming and cleansing the tissues. As it stimulates the circulation, it will keep you warm and encourage you to stretch your legs. Staying shut up indoors with the central heating on is a prime way to incubate yourself some hefty germs. Ginger is also anti-inflammatory, so if the flu has you in its tender clutches, drink ginger tea or pour boiling water over some chopped fresh ginger and add a squeeze of lemon juice and some honey.

Nettles are a real favourite though. Nettle tea or tincture will clear acidic wastes from your tissues, leaving less debris for the body to tackle by other means. It is nutritive too: iron, vitamin C, calcium and many other minerals are found in its leaves, once they have been subdued into a suitable form to imbibe.

As people turn back to such natural methods to keep themselves free of the common cold, a greater understanding of the problems inherent in antibiotic use is happily coinciding with a deeper scientific appreciation of the benefits of many traditional herbal remedies. As well as being as efficacious as their pharmaceutical counterparts, they often have a distinct lack of the distressing side effects that dog many conventional drugs.

Antibiotics, despite being vitally important in multifarious conditions, are not always the answer for colds and flu. They work only when bacterial infections are present, for those with bronchitis, etc. They do not work against viral infections and, indeed, are frequently less than useful when given in such circumstances as they kill both friendly and unfriendly bacteria, leaving people vulnerable to thrush and bowel problems

Overuse of antibiotics has additionally created an ever-growing number of bacteria that are immune to them, threatening doctors' ability to treat serious illness. The emergence of superbugs - pathogens with a resistance to antimicrobial drugs - was firmly linked to the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in a report of the Standing Medical Advisory Committee of UK.



Happily for those anxious to avoid excessive antibiotic prescription, the herb Echinacea, in the form of fresh herbal extract A.Vogel Echinaforce[®], is used to protect and treat colds, influenza type infections and similar upper respiratory tract infections.

A.Vogel Echinaforce[®] works by increasing the efficiency of the immune reaction, making the body more able to identify and kill off invading bacteria and viruses. Taken prophylactically, it acts as a preventative to ward off infections or it can tackle infections already present. One of the many benefits of taking Echinacea in viral infections is that it stimulates the immune system to attack any invading virus rather than a specific one, making it effective even when viruses mutate.

One of the problems of flu vaccinations is that they target a specific virus, often last year's model, leaving the patient still vulnerable to the plethora of this year's new, special offer viruses... Unlike antibiotics, Echinacea does not have undesirable side effects, such as destroying friendly bowel flora. In fact, Echinacea has anti-fungal properties allowing it to kill off unfriendly organisms such as those causing thrush, whilst promoting the growth of friendly bacteria and bowel flora.

Add a regular dose of vitamin C to your cold prevention package. Vitamin C stimulates the production of white blood cells and mops up unfriendly free radicals that do damage to body tissues. The body cannot absorb large doses of this vitamin at one time, so take a low dose several times a day for better protection. If you live or work in a polluted environment, this will be even more necessary.

Helping the natural detoxification processes of the body throughout the year can, therefore, make a great difference to your hanky consumption during the winter!

