

## The Common Cold – Herbal Clinic Swansea

One of around 200 different viruses causes the common cold, also referred to as a viral upper respiratory tract infection. Symptoms may include cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, sneezing and runny nose.

Colds tend to occur more often in autumn and winter as the change in outer climatic conditions has an effect on our internal environment. Cold and damp cools our bodily systems down so that we are less able to clear toxins from the body. This establishes a medium that is suited to the growth of bacteria and viruses and we 'catch a cold'. Have you ever wondered why a particular friend or colleague never seems to get a cold, whilst you are rarely without one? You may have come to the conclusion that contact with the virus is not the whole story behind why we become infected - if the 'soil' of the body is right then a virus can survive, and thrive.

### Prevention

So how do we prevent frequent colds? Working in harmony with the seasons is a simple, yet effective strategy. As the temperature cools down we need to warm ourselves up. Over the summer cooling salads and juices may have kept us refreshed, now is the time for warming soups, spiced stews and root vegetables, which are seasonally available at this time. Cumin, cinnamon, turmeric and garlic can all help to keep the body warm and the digestive fire strong, therefore preventing a build up of toxins, which encourage bacterial proliferation.

We also need to make sure our metabolism is running warm so continuing a regular aerobic exercise program is essential, whether this be a brisk walk with your dog or cycling to work. Ensure your system is fighting fit and it will fight off those microscopic invaders for you.

The immune system plays an important role in preventing infection and is particularly influenced by stress – mental, physical and emotional. Take a moment to notice the stresses in your life - Are you working too hard? Are you emotionally content? Do you have a high toxin load from factors such as smoking, alcohol or fumes? Allow a little time to re-balance and it may save you time off sick in the long run.

### Herbal medicines

Treated naturally with rest and herbal medication, the severity of a cold can be diminished and the duration reduced.

Many useful herbs for easing the symptoms of a cold are widely available and can be utilised at home. An infusion can be made with 1 tablespoon of freshly grated ginger root steeped in boiling water, some honey (preferably manuka which has antiseptic properties) and freshly squeezed lemon. This can help to remove mucus and stimulate the body's natural defences. If you have some cinnamon quills available try breaking them up and adding them to the teapot for a delicious warming tonic. Fresh sage is specific for clearing viral and bacterial infections from the throat and sinus. To prepare, place a handful of the leaves in a teapot and pour on boiling water. Cover and allow it to infuse for 10 minutes then add a little honey and drink frequently until the problem clears. (NOTE: caution in pregnancy, herbs can be powerful in their actions and excessive quantities can have an effect on the female reproductive system).

Tussilago farfara (Coltsfoot) - Tussilago soothes the mucous membranes (the delicate inner lining of the respiratory and digestive organs), tones the bronchi and aids expectoration and the removal of mucus.

Capsicum minimum (Chilli pepper): Capsicum is strongly heating, increasing localised blood flow and stimulating the immunity.

### Iridology

The lungs are represented in the right iris at 2-3 o'clock and in the left iris at 9-10 o'clock (when looking at your own reflection). Noticeable gaps, pigments or colour changes may indicate predisposition to lung complaints.

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