

The naturopathic advisor



Experts from the College of Naturopathic Medicine answer your health questions. This issue, you asked:



Q What herbs can promote winter health?

Winter months not only bring in coughs, colds and 'flu, we find it harder to stay warm, and our circulation tends to be less effective at throwing out toxins. The following herbs can be helpful.

Cinnamon stick is a fragrant winter favourite, able to bring circulation as far as cold fingers and toes. It is also a potent anti-viral and anti-bacterial, making it a vital herb for the worst of the 'flu season. It continues to be useful post colds and 'flu, during the debilitating convalescence stage.

Ginger root is the classic for warming up circulation and helping colds and 'flu. It is often twinned as a herbal tea with cinnamon to warm and detoxify. Its anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties are most effective when it is freshly grated and eaten raw. You can simply chew a teaspoon of it.

Siberian ginseng root increases the body's ability to resist infection, lessening the likelihood of picking up colds. It stops the 'cold' wearing us down and making us more exposed to microbes. Because of this, we are less likely to gravitate to eating weight-gaining carbs and other cold-weather foods.

Elderberry is of increasing interest as it appears to 'inactivate' any given 'flu and virus strain. It helps to shorten and reduce its symptoms and severity. It has been made and used as a home remedy as a syrup for centuries, to treat tickly coughs, colds and fevers, where, if taken at the onset, nastier versions like 'flu, bronchitis and pneumonia are less likely to

progress. It is good taken throughout the colder winter months on a weekly basis, and daily during a cold.

Nettle leaves are a good winter detox choice. In winter, it is harder to sweat and naturally get rid of accumulated toxins and the festive season's indulgences give us more reasons to detox than the rest of the year! Nettle's high levels of flavonoids and potassium makes it excellent for moving on waste products via the increased urine production. Use either as an organic powder (one 5g teaspoon in smoothies), or as a leaf tea. Seek personalised advice from your herbalist.



Your expert

Your question has been answered by Naturopath and Herbalist, Jill R. Davies, who lectures for CNM. CNM trains students for successful careers in Naturopathic Nutrition, Herbal Medicine,

Acupuncture, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, and Natural Chef. Find out more at www.naturopathy.ie or by calling 01 878 8060.

STAYING WELL IN WINTER



Health Stores Ireland President, Gerald Colfer, offers some essential advice on staying well during the cold season.

The darker months of winter are a challenge to many of us when it comes to staying well, with less daylight and harsher weather bringing what can seem like a maelstrom of colds and 'flus, coughs, sneezes and sore throats. Consequently, in health stores, we spend these months advising our customers just how not to succumb to winter ailments and here are our top tips.

- Eat seasonally and look for a rainbow of coloured vegetables in salads, soups and stews, wholegrains for sustained energy and good quality protein. Fermented foods and drinks can also do wonders for your wellbeing. Try sauerkraut, kombucha, kefir, live yoghurt, miso and tempeh. You can discover some great tastes, as well as doing yourself a lot of good.
- Make sure your nutritional status is up to par with a good multivitamin. This is especially important if your diet is sometimes a little hit and miss. Look for a brand with extras like green foods and digestive enzymes. These often come in powder or liquid form.
- Take a good probiotic blend. One way of optimising this is a little trick we often recommend. Choose two or three multi-strain probiotics (all with different bacteria) and take them on consecutive days. This is one way of ensuring you get the very broadest spectrum of good bacteria with optimum benefits for digestion, immunity and, according to the latest research, even mental wellbeing.
- Consider additional supplements of the nutrients which specifically support immunity. These include vitamins C, D and E,

selenium and zinc.

- Use herbals such as ginger and cayenne for poor winter circulation, echinacea and astragalus to boost immunity and garlic and elderberry to help fight off the bugs.
- Try medicinal mushrooms. Research is showing them to be powerhouses when it comes to boosting immunity or regulating an immune system that's out of sync. Turkey tail, cordyceps, shiitake, chaga and maitake have all been shown to have powerful benefits. They're easy to use either in capsule or powder form.
- Deal with stress to avoid its bad effects on immunity, as well as on several other body systems. Gentle exercise, mindfulness and meditation, as well as activities such as yoga and tai chi are all invaluable.
- Practice positivity and gratitude. I firmly believe that a happy outlook is a coat of armour.

And lastly, remember that if you do come down with that terrible 'bug that everyone else seems to have, you can look on the bright side here too. A lot of toxins get thrown off at a time like this and, who knows, maybe you really do need a few days tucked up in bed!

Find out more at www.healthstores.ie



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