

Tips to Relieve Cold Symptoms

Most adults experience 3-4 colds a year while children experience colds more frequently. While the only cure for a common cold is to rest and let it run its course, there are remedies that may help you feel better and relieve some of the symptoms.

- **Prioritize Sleep.** If you feel run down and extra tired, it is important to listen to your body and get some rest. While you sleep, your immune system releases cells called cytokines (a type of “natural killer” cell) that fight viruses like those that cause the common cold.
- **Drink Plenty of Fluids.** Drinking clear fluids like water, broth, or warm lemon water helps thin mucus in your sinuses and lungs and makes it easier to clear congestion.
- **Eat Immune Boosting Foods.** Foods that contain antioxidant rich nutrients and anti-inflammatory properties may shorten the duration of the common cold and reduce the severity of your symptoms. Foods like kiwi, citrus fruits (e.g., oranges, grapefruit), berries (e.g., strawberries, blueberries), green vegetables (e.g., spinach, broccoli, kale, green peppers), seeds and nuts (e.g., flaxseeds, walnuts), and high fiber foods (e.g., black beans, peas, and chickpeas).
- **Honey.** A spoonful of honey can be one of the most effective natural remedies for relieving cold symptoms. Honey has antiviral and antibacterial properties that thin mucus, relieve a sore throat, and ease coughing. If coughing is keeping you up at night, try a teaspoon of honey with an herbal tea or warm lemon water.
- **Vitamin C.** Vitamin C rich foods like kiwi, citrus fruit, and berries may reduce the duration and severity of common cold symptoms when taken within the first 24 hours of a cold.
- **Zinc.** Zinc is an essential mineral found in some foods such as red meat, poultry, beans, seeds and nuts. Zinc can boost immune function and may reduce the duration of a cold.



Vitamin D. In the United States, you are more likely to get a cold in the fall and winter when you are less likely to get the adequate amount of Vitamin D from the sun's rays. A study examining the effects of Vitamin D found that supplementing Vitamin D 1000 IU for four weeks, followed by eight weeks of Vitamin D 400 IU, led to a 15% reduction in severity of cold symptoms and 36% reduction in length of colds.

Cold Treatments to Avoid

- **Over-the-Counter Medications Containing Phenylephrine.** According to a September 2023 FDA ruling, over-the-counter medications containing phenylephrine (e.g., Dayquil and Sudafed), are ineffective against nasal congestion and don't work any better than a placebo.
- **Decongestant Nasal Sprays.** Congestion can worsen after you stop using the nasal decongestant spray.
- **Honey for children under 1 year of age.** Honey could contain *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria spores which could cause infant botulism in babies.

<https://www.health.com/how-to-get-rid-of-a-cold-fast-8391747?hid=1d2bc1a6ed3c612ce63427ce89f452be1b8bb>

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