

Practical Preventable Medicine



FEVER AND THE COMMON COLD

Influenza has plagued humanity since the beginning of time and most of us have our own ways of dealing with viruses. Hot Lemon drinks bed rest is favoured by many, while a teaspoon of fresh chilli and garlic by others, or even physical exercise. Interestingly all of these methods utilize one our most effective methods of clearing viruses, that being diaphoresis or a good sweat! but more on that later....

During a bad cold season, it is very important that we all take precautions if you do experience symptoms of a cold to wash carefully and use simple hygiene to minimise sharing it with everyone. If you get a mild fever, DO NOT overuse paracetamol or anti-inflammatory medicine such as Ibuprofen to bring it down.

FEVER IS A SYMPTOM, NOT THE DISEASE. It is your immune system fighting the infection and raising body temperature is a major part of that, therefore using drugs to block that process prolongs the infection. If you or a child has a temperature you can use moist tepid flannels with some lavender oil to cool naturally on wrists, forehead, neck etc. Administer paracetamol in pain such as bad sore throat etc. or if the fever goes above 40 deg. after the methods described.

That's where the sweat comes in. Herbs, chilli, garlic, hot soup, hot lemon drink with a couple of slices of ginger and honey are all great ways to get a good sweat going and are very useful in **early** stages of cold or Flu provided there is no great fever or sweating already. Use a chest vapour rub, old fashioned but great. Get into bed, rug up after your chosen diaphoretic and let your skin, your body's largest organ doing its job and sweat out the toxin/virus. It's important that sweating as a therapy is only used in the early stages of a flu, during the first few days, after that you will need to visit a health professional to find the best way to proceed if symptoms persist.

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Herbs can help; Peppermint and Chrysanthemum tea, Andrographis capsules, Elderflower/berry, and dandelion tops and olive leaf for strong flu symptoms. Sore throats respond to gargling warm salty water or strong sage tea. Up your vitamin C intake, drink lots of hot water and eat light foods such as soup or steamed vegies.

If you must go out, RUG UP! Wear coats, scarves and a beanie to keep you protected from the cold.

Until next time

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