

## Boost Immunity to Springtime Colds with Echinacea

Every year people get bogged down with stuffy noses, watery eyes, congestion, sore throats, headaches and sneezing. The common cold rears its ugly head when the snow finally melts away and the trees get their tiny buds. Spring is normally a time when a lot of colds and viruses are passed around. It is inconvenient not only because of the annoying symptoms; it also makes us miss days of work or school. It interrupts our lives for days at a time. Few people can afford the luxury of taking off from everything they are expected to do for that period of time.

The springtime cold season doesn't have to be a problem for you, though. You can boost your immunity to cold and flu symptoms with echinacea. This herb can reduce the time you spend nursing a cold and get you back on your feet much faster than waiting it out or taking prescription drugs.

What is Echinacea?

Echinacea is a flowering plant, also known as the purple coneflower, found in the North American plains. This powerful plant has long been used as a medical alternative to stimulate the immune system and protect the body from infection and disease. Echinacea is most commonly found in herbal teas and in extract form and is used as a home remedy for the spring time cold season.

How Echinacea Boosts Immunity

Echinacea works like a natural antibiotic. It attacks toxins in the blood to fight off disease and strengthen the immune system. It also reduces inflammation in the body. Typically, it is more effective if you start taking it at the first sign of a cold. The most popular use for echinacea is to reduce the duration and severity of colds, respiratory infections and sinus problems.

Inconclusive Data and Controversy about Echinacea

There are a large number of studies that have been done of the echinacea herb to determine if it is actually helpful in reducing the common cold. The problem is the results are not consistent. Part of this is because different parts of the flower have been used in different studies. Some report that echinacea is effective at boosting immunity and speeding up recovery from the springtime cold. Others say there is not a significant difference in the duration of a cold when using Echinacea.

One thing to consider about the herb is the possible side effects. No major side effects have been cited regarding the use of echinacea; however, it could cause an allergic reaction. It is also possible to develop rash or asthma from taking echinacea.

Recently, researchers have started to look at the collective data on echinacea to determine if it is truly effective at treating colds and preventing diseases. According to a review in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, "published evidence supports echinacea's benefit in decreasing the incidence and duration of the common cold." The review went on to state: "Echinacea decreased the odds of developing the common cold by 58 percent and the duration of a cold by 1.4 days."

This is promising news, which confirms the use of Echinacea can reduce the severity of a cold and speed the recovery process along so you can get back to your regular routine that much faster.

Reference:

*The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, Volume 7, Issue 9, September 2007, pg. 580

## About the Author

More information on [echinacea root](#) is available at VitaNet &reg;, LLC Health Food Store. <http://vitanetonline.com/>

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