



Women's Herbal Medicine Holiday Survival Guide

WHAT YOU NEED & HOW TO USE IT

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The holiday season is a really busy time for our immune systems. We're not just fighting off the typical seasonal colds and flu that everyone around us seems to have, but underneath the fun of gift giving and family time is the stress of gift purchasing, travel, spending money that we might not have, and the sometimes not-so-easy realities of family gatherings and family dynamics.

Add to these stressors a bit of extra sugar here and there and "more-than-usual" amounts of alcohol because of holiday parties, and your body's defense system can rapidly become overwhelmed, especially if you were already burning the candle at both ends.

And who isn't?

All of these triggers can beat down our best defenses and leave us battling little health fires - signs of inflammation from low-level to full-on infections and other annoying symptoms - that tell us our body is under stress. During this time of year in my medical practice I see not only a whole lot more colds, but sinus infections, vaginal yeast infections, urinary tract infections, cold sores and genital herpes outbreaks, acid reflux, and constipation, just to name a few of the common conditions that get triggered by stress, fatigue, travel and other demands of the season.

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So I've put together **an easy, travel-friendly Women's Herbal Holiday Survival Kit** for you. It is available as a download at the end of this article, and also written out below, to get you through the things that go bump in your body over the next few weeks - without you having to down Ibuprofen, Tylenol, Prilosec, or antibiotics, all of which can damage your gut, kill off your microbiome, and cause a domino effect of symptoms that you'll be dealing with for months to come! But before the herbal survival kit...



Part 1:

Top 5 Holiday Health Survival Tips

1. AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE:

Ok, I know I didn't make up that clever saying. But even hundreds of years after good old Ben (Franklin, that is) said it, it's still true. If you typically get sick going into the holiday season, or after, with a cough, bronchitis, or yeast infection that just won't quit, be on your best defense *ahead of time*. Take 2000-4000 units of vitamin D 3, 30-60 mg of zinc, and a probiotic daily. If you typically get cold sores, get on 1000-2000 mg of L-lysine daily starting now; if you typically get a cold or other upper respiratory (cough, sinus infection) get your Urban Moonshine *Immune Zoom* going now along with Host Defense's *My Community Comprehensive Immune Support*, and if you typically get a urinary tract infection, start taking Cranberry-D-Mannose capsules daily. And if you typically find yourself run down and burnt out before the season ends or just after, or experience any of the above conditions, be sure to start taking an herbal adaptogen formula to bolster your nerves *and* your immunity!



2. ALL THINGS IN MODERATION (& SKIP THE SECONDS):

It's not usually a single piece of pie or one mixed drink that does your immune system in - it's the combination of pie, cookies, a bit of chocolate here and there, a few drinks at that party, and overeating at meals and parties that tips your system out of balance - even if you're otherwise super healthy. So figure out what you enjoy most, have that in moderation, and skip the extra trimmings. Ditto that on any choices you make from alcohol to cookies and you'll enjoy the holidays without weight regrets and sickness that keep on giving through the winter.

3. HUG DON'T HANDSHAKE... AND CARRY PURELL:

Aww, hugs are nice. And they are not only a great way to spread love; they are a great way to prevent spreading germs from hand to hand - which is how most illness travels in the winter! But since you also have to touch door knobs, faucets, and a billion other things winter germs are hanging out on, bring along some alcohol-based hand sanitizers (NOT the kind with antibacterial stuff in it which only breeds resistant infections!), or at least wash your hands with soap and water a few times throughout the day, especially before you eat, and try to avoid touching your hands to your eyes, nose, and mouth - a sure fire way to cut down on your likelihood of catching a cold.



4. REST MORE, STRESS LESS.

Stress and fatigue are two of the biggest immune system offenders. It's easy to party a lot, stay up late, and take care of everyone else at the expense of sleep and personal down time during the holidays. But be careful to keep up on your rest. 7 hours/night is a great goal with some time built into your days for peace of mind. Also, it's easy to let love-interest and family dynamics get you down during the holidays. This is a great time to focus on giving love, expressing gratitude, laughing a lot - and avoiding those who cause you pain and suffering to the best of your abilities.

5. PRACTICE SAFE SEX:

Wow, you probably weren't expecting that one, were you. But as a midwife-MD I've gotta' include it on the top 5 list. I've seen too many post-holiday whoopsies - from sexually transmitted infections to pregnancies - to exclude this tip! So throw some condoms into your travel first aid kit (note Chlamydia can outwit condoms!), pay attention to where you are in your cycle if you practice natural birth control methods, please try to avoid careless hook-ups, and think before you leap. If you do leap, make sure to "wear a parachute!"

Part 2:

Your Herbal Medicine Holiday Survival Kit

Here are safe, effective natural solutions for 6 common health issues that may flare during the holiday season. I am selecting from some of the best proprietary products on the market so you can order these easily online or walk into a natural foods store or coop anywhere you go and find what you need. Many of these supplements can be purchased in [my online dispensary](#).

Better yet, if you know you have a tendency to get certain conditions every holiday season, get what you need ahead of time, start with prevention now, and take your herbal products with you if you have to travel.

Check with your doctor if you are pregnant and experience any of these conditions or symptoms. The recommendations below are generally safe for short-term use during pregnancy and lactation *except* for the supplements for urinary tract infection, the Black Elderberry Nighttime syrup, and the use of DGL (for more than a few days). Any pregnant woman with a UTI should see her midwife or obstetric care provider right away.



ACID REFLUX/GERD

- **Rebalancing tip:** Avoid foods that trigger reflux including coffee, chocolate, alcohol, tomatoes and peppers, spicy foods, citrus, and eating within 3 hours of bedtime.
- **Take:** DGL (deglycyrrhizinated licorice), 2-3 chewable tablets between meals and before bed, to treat and prevent symptoms. There are many good products available on the market.
- **See your doctor:** If you have severe abdominal pain, persistent pain, are unable to eat, or are passing any blood from above or below in your digestive system.

CONSTIPATION

- **Rebalancing tip:** Cut back on rich foods and baked goods; increase fiber and vegetables, get some exercise, for example, a good walk daily if weather permits, or have a personal dance party for 10-15 minutes each day. Also, make sure you go when you need to - ignoring the need to have a BM because of travel or staying at someone else's house makes the urge less obvious and increases constipation!
- **Take:** Fiber...Keep a small jar or baggie of freshly ground flax seeds on hand and take 1 tbsp. daily in water or a shake, or in a high-fiber, low-sugar gluten free muffin. + Take from 2-6 150 mg magnesium citrate capsules daily, up to 4 before bed, or 3 in the morning, 3 before bed. This acts as a safe, non-habit forming osmotic laxative and is nutritive as well. Also for gas and bloating drink ginger tea, chamomile tea, and take a daily probiotic.

- **See your doctor:** If you have serious abdominal, pain, inability to pass any stool or gas for more than a typical duration of constipation, you develop fever, the constipation is something you've not had before and doesn't resolve in a day or two without other symptoms, or are passing blood in the toilet or on your toilet tissue beyond what you'd expect if you have hemorrhoids.

COLDS AND COUGHS

- **Rebalancing tip:** Cut the dairy, sugar, and alcohol out of your diet until you feel completely better, and switch to mostly warming foods in your diet – soups, simple whole grains, lean meats, and steamed or sautéed vegetables. Drink plenty of water plain or with lemon or lime, and get extra rest.
- **Take:** 30-60 mg zinc citrate, a probiotic with at least 20 billion CFUs, and 2000 units of Vitamin D3 daily and Herb Pharm Super Echinacea twice daily. + For flu Take 1 tbs. Planetary Herbals Echinacea-Elderberry Syrup 1-3 times daily. Or Take 1 Tbsp. of Herb Pharm Elderberry Glycerite 3 times daily, with each dose of the Elderberry + Umcka Cold Care if you have a cough or bronchitis. If a cough is keeping you awake at night, try Gaia Herbs Black Elderberry Nighttime Syrup. Also, honey, 1 tsp. repeated as needed (avoid if you are diabetic) is a quick cough reliever and a chest vapor rub like Vicks can work like a charm for an annoying night-time cough. Ginger tea is an excellent cold, chills and cough reliever.

- **See your doctor:** If you have worsening symptoms, difficulty breathing, chest pain, are coughing blood, or have symptoms that don't improve within the expected 5-10 days of a typical cold.

COLD SORES (ORAL OR GENITAL HERPES OUTBREAKS)

- **Rebalancing tip:** Get extra rest and practice a mindfulness meditation to reduce stress which triggers outbreaks. Also cut back on sugar and alcohol, as these can be triggers, too.
- **Take:** 1000 mg L-lysine twice daily at the earliest sign of an outbreak, and continue for 1 week after symptoms start to go away; then stay on 1000 mg/day for at least a month, or daily if you have recurrent sores + Host Defense My Community Comprehensive Immune Support daily along with 30-60 mg zinc citrate and 2000 units of Vitamin D3 daily.
- **See your doctor:** If this is a first herpes outbreak, if your symptoms are accompanied by fever, chills, or other systemic symptoms, if you have cold sores on or in your nose or near your eyes. Note: Avoid sharing glasses and utensils with others, kissing on the mouth, and if genital sores, sexual contact to prevent the spread of the HSV virus which causes cold sores.



URINARY TRACT INFECTION

- **Rebalancing tip:** Drink more water, urinate as soon as you feel the urge.
- **Take:** Gaia Herbs Usnea Uva Ursi Supreme or Planetary Herbals Cranberry Bladder Defense + Cranberry-D-Mannose (there are numerous products on the market to choose from; look for one with the least fillers, for example, NOW Foods).
- **See your doctor:** If you have fever, blood in your urine, back pain, nausea, or in the absence of the above symptoms, have tried treating for 24-48 hrs. and symptoms aren't improving significantly

YEAST INFECTION (OR OTHER VAGINITIS)

- **Rebalancing tip:** Eliminate all sugar (including fruit and juice), yeasted products, flour products, and alcohol from your diet until symptoms are completely resolved. Wear cotton panties (no thongs), and avoid any scented topical products such as soaps, bath products, or douches that can worsen chemical causes of irritation and inflammation.



- **Take:** An oral probiotic containing *Lactobacillus rhamnosis* and *Lactobacillus reuteri*, 1 capsule twice daily. Pro-Flora by Integrative Therapeutics is an excellent product but requires a practitioner to order if for you. ABX by Klaire is also excellent and contains just the *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, along with strains of gut-healthy *Bifidobacter* spp. + Insert 1 capsule of a probiotic containing the above strains into the vagina daily. Flora Femme is one of the over-the-counter products that contains both.
- **See your doctor:** If you have fever, or other signs of systemic infection, or if you have a history of chronic yeast infections that keep recurring in spite of appropriate medical treatment.



Symptom/ Condition	Lifestyle change	Herbal Remedies (Take as directed on the product package unless otherwise specified below)	When to see the doctor*
Cold sores (or genital herpes outbreaks)	Avoid sharing glasses and utensils with others, kissing on the mouth, and if genital sores, sexual contact to prevent the spread of the HSV virus which causes cold sores.	Take 1000 mg L-lysine twice daily at the earliest sign of an out- break, and continue for 1 week after symptoms start to go away; then stay on 1000 mg/day for at least a month, or daily if you have recurrent sores. + Take Host Defense My Community Comprehensive Immune Support daily along with 30-60 mg zinc citrate and 2000 units of Vitamin D3 daily.	If this is a first herpes outbreak, if your symptoms are accompanied by fever, chills, or other systemic symptoms, if you have cold sores on or in your nose or near your eyes.
Urinary Tract Infection	Drink more water, urinate as soon as you feel the urge	Gaia Herbs Usnea Uva Ursi Supreme OR Planetary Herbals Cranberry Bladder Defense + Take either or the above with Cranberry-D- Mannose (there are numerous products on the market to choose from; look for one with the least fillers, for example, NOW Foods).	If you have fever, blood in your urine, back pain, nausea, or in the absence of the above symptoms, have tried treating for 24-48 hrs. and symptoms aren't improving significantly

Symptom/ Condition	Lifestyle change	Herbal Remedies (Take as directed on the product package unless otherwise specified below)	When to see the doctor*
Yeast infection (or other vaginitis)	Eliminate all sugar (including fruit and juice), yeasted products, flour products, and alcohol from your diet until symptoms are completely resolved. Wear cotton panties (no thongs), and avoid any scented topical products such as soaps, bath products, or douches that can worsen chemical causes of irritation and inflammation.	Take an oral probiotic containing <i>Lactobacillus rhamnosis</i> and <i>Lactobacillus reuteri</i> , 1 capsule twice daily. Pro-Flora by Integrative Therapeutics is an excellent product but requires a practitioner to order it. ABX by Klaire is also excellent and contains just the <i>Lactobacillus rhamnosis</i> , along with strains of gut-healthy <i>Bifidobacter</i> spp. + Insert 1 capsule of a probiotic containing the above strains into the vagina daily. Flora Femme is one of the over the counter products that contains both.	If you have fever, or other signs of systemic infection, or if you have a history of chronic yeast infections that keep recurring in spite of appropriate medical treatment.

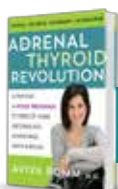


Symptom/ Condition	Lifestyle change	Herbal Remedies (Take as directed on the product package unless otherwise specified below)	When to see the doctor*
Colds, coughs	Cut the dairy, sugar, and alcohol out of your diet until you feel completely better, and switch to mostly warming foods in your diet – soups, simple whole grains, lean meats, and steamed or sautéed vegetables. Drink plenty of water plain or with lemon or lime, and get extra rest.	<p>Take 30-60 mg zinc citrate and 2000 units of Vitamin D3 daily.</p> <p>+</p> <p>Take 1 tbs. Planetary Herbals Echinacea-Elderberry Syrup 1-3 times daily for cold and flu. Or Take 1 Tbsp. of Herb Pharm Elderberry Glycerite 3 times daily, and their Super Echinacea with each dose of the Elderberry.</p> <p>+</p> <p>Umcka Cold Care if you have a cough or bronchitis and Gaia Herbs Black Elderberry Nighttime Syrup if a cough is keeping you awake.</p> <p>Also,</p> <p>Honey, 1 tsp., repeated as needed (avoid if you are diabetic) is a quick cough reliever and a chest vapor rub like Vicks can work like a charm for an annoying night time cough. Ginger tea is excellent for relieving cold, chills and cough.</p>	If you have worsening symptoms, difficulty breathing, chest pain, are coughing blood, or have symptoms that don't improve within the expected 5-10 days of a typical cold.

Symptom/ Condition	Lifestyle change	Herbal Remedies (Take as directed on the product package unless otherwise specified below)	When to see the doctor*
Acid reflux/GERD	Avoid foods that trigger reflux, i.e. coffee, chocolate, alcohol, tomatoes and peppers, spicy foods, citrus, and eating within 3 hours of bedtime.	Take DGL, 2-3 chewable tablets between meals and before bed, to treat and prevent symptoms. Deglycyrrhizinated licorice, or DGL, made from licorice. There are many good products easily available on the market.	You have severe abdominal pain, persistent pain, are unable to eat, or are passing any blood from above or below in your digestive system.
Constipation	Cut back on rich foods and baked goods; increase fiber and vegetables, get some exercise, for example, a good walk in daily if weather safety permits, or have a personal dance party for 10-15 minutes each day. Also, make sure you go when you need to – ignoring the need to have a BM because of travel or staying at someone else's house makes the urge less obvious and increases constipation!	Keep a small jar or baggie or freshly ground flax seeds on hand and take 1 tbsp. daily in water or a shake, or in a high fiber, low sugar gluten free muffin. + Take from 2-6 150 mg magnesium citrate capsules daily, up to 4 before bed, or 3 in the morning, 3 before bed. This acts as a safe, non-habit forming osmotic laxative and is nutritive as well. Also for gas and bloating drink ginger tea, chamomile tea, and take a daily probiotic.	You have serious abdominal pain, inability to pass any stool or gas for more than a typical duration of constipation, you develop fever, the constipation is something you've not had before and doesn't resolve in 1-2 days without other symptoms, or are passing blood in the toilet or on your toilet tissue beyond what you'd expect if you have hemorrhoids.

Note:

- Pregnant women should see their doctor or midwife if they develop any of the above conditions.
- Gaia Herbs Urinary Support, Planetary Herbals Cranberry Bladder Defense and Gaia Herbs Black Elderberry Nighttime Syrup are not appropriate for use in pregnancy, nor is regular use of licorice for more than a few days if needed for reflux.
- The above recommendations are not meant to substitute for appropriate medical evaluation and treatment.



Want more?

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