

Flu Supplements

Influenza is a virus that causes the Flu and typically begins to appear in the Fall and then recedes as Spring progresses. Flu is potentially a more serious disease for those with chronic respiratory illnesses and immunodeficiency, though mortality has been seen in seemingly healthy people as well. The best way to prevent the spread of flu is through good hand washing with soap and hot water and avoiding people who have flu-like symptoms. People who have questionable or definite symptoms should avoid being out in public. Covering one's mouth during a cough can decrease how far and how much distance the virus will travel. Having a healthy diet, avoiding sugar, high fructose corn syrup, and processed food along with adequate intake of vitamins and minerals also can be helpful.

For the prevention of flu these are doses of therapies that can be taken longer-term until the flu threat has been lessened:

1. **Vitamin D3 (probably the most important):** Vitamin D, while known for its use in calcium absorption, is also very important to help fight off infections. Quite possibly, part of the reason that the "flu season" occurs in the winter is because people do not spend as much time outdoors. If possible, people should get their 25-hydroxy vitamin D level checked and get the value above 50ng/ml. If not able to check a level, all adults can take 5000IU of Vitamin D3, children under 25 lbs can take 1000IU, children 25-50 lbs can take 2000IU, and children over 50 lbs can take 3000IU. We have capsules of 1000, 2000 and 5000IU as well as a concentrated liquid that has 1000IU per single drop. If a person is suspected to have a vitamin D deficiency, either revealed by testing or from lack of direct sun exposure (sunscreen blocks the formation of active vitamin D), I would consider taking 5 times the dose mentioned above for 1 week only in order to build up the body's levels and then drop down to the maintenance dose. For more information about vitamin D, go to www.vitamincouncil.com.
2. **Probiotics:** Preferably a mixed product of lactobacillus and bifidophilus. Babies under 1 year old can get 5 billion organisms per day, children 1-5 years old can get 10 billion, and those older than 5 years old can get 20 billion per day.
3. **Vitamin C:** - preferably as Ester C or Buffered C. Young children (under 5) can take 250mg twice a day and older children and adults can take 500mg twice a day.
4. **Zinc:** this is a mineral and should be taken divided into at least 2 doses spread through the day. Children under the age of 4 can take 5mg daily and older children and adults can take 10mg a day.
5. **Vitamin A:** Children 2-24 months can take 1250IU daily, children 2-5 years old can take 2500IU daily and people over the age of 5 can take 5000IU daily.
6. **Larix:** This is an herb derived from the bark of the Western Larch tree. The active ingredient, arabinogalactan is the same as Echinacea which is believed to increase production of white blood cells. Larix has been found to be much stronger than Echinacea when using similar amounts, and can be used by patients over 6 months of age. Younger children (over 6 months of age) can take ¼ teaspoon of the powder once a day, and older children and adults can take ½ teaspoon or 1 tablet once a day.

7. **Elderberry:** This is the fruit of the elder tree and contains substances called flavinoids that helps to reduce swelling, inflammation and support the immune system. Adults can take 1 table spoon of elderberry extract syrup up to 4 times a day. Young children can take 1 teaspoon daily.

8. **Selenium:** This powerful antioxidant has been shown in animal studies to decrease lung damage in mice that contracted influenza virus. Children under 1 year old can safely take around 50mcg daily, children 1-4 years old can take 100-125mcg, children over 4 years old and adults can take 200mcg daily.

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With permission this resource is a modified extract from the article [“Flu Update- January 10, 2013”](#) written by Dr David Berger, M.D. ([Wholistic Pediatrics](#)).

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