

Kill-A-Cold Recipe

(Written by: Jason Feinsmith)

These techniques, when used together, will kill a cold. Despite significant lack of sleep, I never got a cold in my first two years at Stanford Business School. It's best to take these steps the moment you think you feel a cold coming on, because this "recipe" will kill a cold before it gets strong. If you don't start until the cold has gotten very real, you've missed the window to really kill it. In that case, you may have to live with it a couple of days, but this recipe should still help you get rid of the tail end of the cold quicker.

I encourage anyone to try it out. If it works well for you, and even if it doesn't, I'd love to know!

1. Kill throat germs at the source:

- Gargle Listerine before bed-time and when you wake up, and optionally during the day. Scope doesn't help, but Listerine does.

Listerine kills any cold inducing bacteria in your throat. I always keep a mini-Listerine bottle in my day bag. If you don't have Listerine, a teaspoon of baking soda per ¼ cup of water works just as well.

2. Kill germs nearby by washing:

Wash your face with soap to kill germs that can get in your mouse, nose and eyes. Just washing your face a couple of times a day is great. Washing your hands 4 times a day is also helpful. The best thing is to take a shower and wash your hair to get clean everywhere, but any of these things is a step in the right direction.

3. Keep warm:

- Always keep the feet and entire body (from neck down) warm. In the house, always wear at least socks on your feet, eg. never go barefoot.
- Always wear a T-shirt to bed to keep the chest warm.
- Wear a neck warmer (like what you would wear snow skiing) to bed to keep the neck warm.

(Don't wear hats to bed or anything like that - oddly enough, you actually want to keep your head relatively cool.)

4. Take good herbs:

- Vitamin C: 2 grams per day
- Echinacea*: 1 gram in the morning, 1 gram at night
- Alfalfa leaf: 2 grams per day (this stuff is hard to find; it is only needed if you have any nasal congestion)
- Elderberry*: 3 grams per day (this stuff is also hard to find)
- Zinc: 50 milligrams per day

.....Elderberry tends to fight viruses well, while Echinacea is better for bacterial infections. If I don't know which I have, I take both Echinacea and Elderberry to be sure to kill the cold.

5. Sleep:

- If possible, take a couple days to get at least 8 hours of sleep.

6. Drown the cold with water:

- Drink about 10 large glasses of water each day.

7. Eat food with lots of garlic. It works wonders. It's no surprise that garlic was believed to kill evil spirits in medieval times.

Travelers Kill-a-Cold Recipe (alternative):

A friend told me about his own very simple recipe in 2013 just using vitamin C. As soon as you feel a cold coming on, start taking 500 mg of vitamin C every half hour, like clockwork, until you feel all better. I've tried this a couple of times and it's seemed to work OK. Because it is simple and easy to do in any situation, I call this the "Traveler's Kill-a-Cold recipe". If you couple vitamin C saturation with the other techniques here (items 1, 2, 3, etc), then all the complicated herbs in section 3 (Echinacea, zinc, elderberry, etc.) can be less important.

* This "recipe" is an informal suggestion. I do not claim any official medical expertise and I am not a doctor. However, here are some personal comments...

- If you are pregnant or nursing, I would recommend against taking echinacea since I have seen an article cautioning against combining these. I have also seen a recommendation not to take elderberry if you are pregnant or nursing.
- If you have never taken echinacea, it's not a bad idea to take just 1 gram or 500 milligrams to start with. It's a very common herbal remedy available at any drugstore, but I once read on the internet that it may cause (typically minor) allergy-like immune system reactions in rare instances.