

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Q: Do any supplements prevent or limit colds?

The common cold is a viral infection of the upper respiratory tract that causes a runny nose, sore throat and general malaise.



Dr. Heather Auld

Dietwise, it is best to avoid sugar. Some nutrients that may help are vitamin C and zinc. Vitamin C for cold treatment is debatable, but taking 1-3 grams per day may have an anti-histamine effect

and help dry up the runny nose. Zinc lozenges containing 15-25 milligrams of zinc taken the first three days may help shorten the duration of a cold, but they have no benefit after three days.

Likewise, echinacea stimulates the immune system when taking 300 milligrams three times per day at the very onset of a cold. Taking that after the first three days has not been shown to be beneficial. Goldenseal root may be taken for a short time with the echinacea as a tea or tincture to soothe sore throats.

Several other herbs may boost the immunity such as eleuthero, astragalus, elderberry and red raspberry. It is not advised to take all these herbs at the same time. Consult a physician if you have an autoimmune disease or an allergy to daisies. Goldenseal is not to be taken by pregnant women — they should substitute slippery elm.

— Dr. Heather Auld is an obstetrician/gynecologist with Physicians' Primary Care of Southwest Florida in the Park Royal office, 9021 Park Royal Drive, Fort Myers. Call 432-5858.