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A meta-analysis of 3 placebo-controlled studies that all used an effective form of zinc lozenge, zinc acetate, found that they lessen the length of the cold by nearly 3 days (*BJCP* 2016;82:1393-8). A meta-analysis of 3 studies also included only studies of zinc acetate lozenges. The doses ranged from 80-92mg a day. By day 5, 70% of the zinc group had recovered from their colds compared to 27% of the placebo group. People taking zinc lozenges recovered 3.1 times faster (*Open Forum Infect Dis* 2017;4(2):ofx059).

The best forms are zinc acetate, gluconate or gluconate-glycine.

🍄 **COVID BONUS:** Taking zinc may reduce the risk of COVID, hospitalization and death (*Front Med* 2021;doi.org/10.3389/fmed.2021.756707).

### Echinacea

In a double-blind study, 673 healthy people were given echinacea or placebo for 4 months. Those on echinacea had significantly fewer colds and cold symptoms, showing that echinacea both prevents and treats colds. They also had significantly less recurrence of colds (*Evid Based Complement Altern Med* 2012(2):841315).

Several studies demonstrate echinacea's ability to reduce symptoms (J Clin Pharm Ther 2004;29:75- 83) and fight off colds 3 to 4 days faster than placebo (*Eur J Clin Res* 1997;9:261-8; *Arzneimforsch* 2001;51(7):563-8).

An important meta-analysis included 6 high quality, controlled, long term studies of echinacea on respiratory tract infection recurrence and complication, including pneumonia, bronchitis, ear infection and sinusitis. Echinacea reduced the risk of recurrence by a significant 35%. In people with higher susceptibility due to stress or weakened immunity, the reduction was an even more impressive 50%. Echinacea reduced the risk of complications by 50%, including 64.9% reduction of risk of pneumonia, ear infection and tonsillitis (*Adv Ther* 2015;32:187-200).

🍄 **COVID BONUS:** Taking echinacea helps prevent and treat COVID (J Complement Integr Med 2021 Mar 31;18(4):775-781; *Front Pharmacol.* 2022;13:856410).

### Elderberry

Elderberry helps you recover from a cold in only 2-3 days compared to 7-8 days on placebo (J Altern Comp Med 1995;1:361-9; J International Med Res 2004;32:132-40). Elderberry relieves fever, headache, congestion and cough in only 2 days (*Online Journal of Pharmacology and Pharmacokinetics* 2009;5:32-43).

A meta-analysis of 4 controlled studies found that elderberry significantly reduces the severity and duration of symptoms. It works for both flu and cold but may be even more effective for flu (*Complement Ther Med* 2019;42:361-365).

Elderberry inhibits infection by blocking

viruses penetrating into your cells, preventing them from replicating. Elderberry is even better at inhibiting the virus from propagating at later stages if it does get into the cell. Elderberry stimulates the release of cytokines, messengers that immune cells use to coordinate a more efficient response to viruses (J Funct Foods 2019;54:353-60).

### Andrographis

The herb andrographis fights colds and sinusitis better than placebo (*Phytother Res* 1995;9:559-62; *Phytomed* 1996;3:315-18; *Phytomed* 2010;17:178-85). Fast acting, andrographis significantly improves runny nose and sore throat in only 2 days. Cough, headache, ear ache and fatigue significantly improve in 4 (*Phytomed* 1999;6:217-23). Andrographis not only treats, but also prevents colds. When kids take andrographis for 3 winter months, they have a 2.1 lower risk of catching a cold (*Phytomed* 1997;4:101-4).

Double-blind research shows that andrographis reduces cold intensity scores by 11.2 points versus 6.3 points on placebo. Significantly more people on andrographis were significantly or completely better after 5 days. After 10 days, 90.4% of the andrographis group, but only 21.2% of the placebo group was cured (*Altern Ther Health Med* 2018;24(2):16-26).

A systematic review of 33 controlled studies has demonstrated the power of andrographis over acute respiratory infections, including cold, flu, bronchitis, pneumonia, laryngitis and tonsillitis. Andrographis is significantly better than drugs for all symptoms but cough, and adding it to drugs is significantly better than drugs alone (*PLoS One* 2017; 12(8):e0181780).

🍄 **COVID BONUS:** Andrographis accelerates improvement in symptoms of COVID (*Thai PBS World December* 9 2020). 1560mg of Andrographis combined with 112.5mg of eleuthero reduces duration and risk of progression of COVID while improving viral clearance, symptoms and days of hospitalization (*Pharmaceuticals (Basel)*. 2022 Aug;15(8):1013).

### Probiotics

A review of 14 controlled studies found that when you take probiotics for at least a week, you're less likely to catch upper respiratory infections, including colds (*Cochrane Database of Syst Rev* 2011;7:CD006895). You're also less likely to get an ear, nose, throat or respiratory infection (*Ther Adv Respir Dis* 2010;4(5):271-8).

🍄 **COVID BONUS:** A meta-analysis of 10 studies found that probiotics significantly

shorten the duration of COVID symptoms, including diarrhoea, cough and shortness of breath. Probiotics also reduce inflammation and significantly reduce length of hospital stay (*Front. Nutr. May* 2023;10:doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2023.1179432).

### Garlic

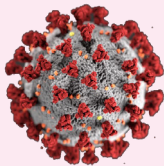
Regularly supplementing aged garlic extract reduces your number of colds by a significant 58% and reduces the severity of the cold if you do get it. It also significantly reduces your number of missed days of school or work (*Clin Nutr* 2012;31:337-344). A group of people taking garlic containing 180mg of allicin for 12 weeks caught 24 colds compared to a placebo group that caught 65. The placebo group suffered 366 days of illness compared to 111 in the garlic group (*Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2014 Nov 11;11:CD006206).

🍄 **COVID BONUS:** Adding allicin, an important ingredient in garlic, or garlic oil improves symptoms and CT scans in people with COVID. Garlic oil also leads to faster negative tests (*Eur J Transl Myol* 2021;31(2):9518; *Pak J Pharm Sci* . 2022 Jul;35(4):1077-1082).

### Vitamin D

Young or old, vitamin D helps. For infants, 1200IU of vitamin D significantly reduces the number of infections, the duration of symptoms and rapidly reduces viral load (*Pediatr Infect Dis J* 2018 Aug;37(8):749-754). In older kids, the same dose reduces incidence of the flu by 42% (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2010 May;91(5):1255-60). Seniors given high dose vitamin D have a significant 40% fewer acute respiratory infections (*J Am Geriatr Soc* 2017 Mar;65(3):496-503).

🍄 **COVID BONUS:** Vitamin D is well-established for preventing COVID, transmission of COVID, severe COVID, hospital and ICU admission, and death from COVID (*Front Public Health.* 2021;9:24559; PLOS One February 3, 2022;doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263069). Low levels of vitamin D are also significantly associated with long COVID (J Clin Endocrinol Metab 13 April 2023;dgad207).



## About Linda Woolven & Ted Snider



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This newsletter is intended for educational purposes only and is in no way intended for self-diagnosis or self-treatment. For health problems, consult a qualified health practitioner.



# THE NATURAL PATH

Your Guide to Good Health & Vitality  
Cutting Edge Research Made Easy

by Linda Woolven, B.A., Master Herbalist, Acupuncturist and Ted Snider, B.Ed., M.A.



THESE REMARKABLE SUPPLEMENTS CAN HELP YOU FIGHT COLDS & COVID THIS WINTER

### Vitamin C

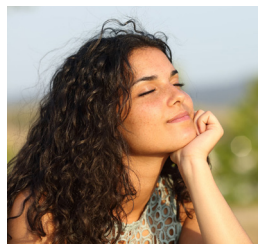
This most famous cold fighter prevents and treats colds. A review of 21 studies of 1-8g of vitamin C found that vitamin C reduces the length and severity of colds by 23% (*Scand J Infect Dis* 1994;26:1-6). A double-blind study gave 1g of vitamin C or placebo to 28 people for 8 weeks. Vitamin C reduced the risk of cold by 45%. Compared to placebo, it shortened the length of the cold by 59% (*Nutrients* 2014;6:2572-83). But, it's best to take at least 2g a day (*Med Hypotheses* 1999;52:171- 8). A recent study found 8 times higher number of colds on placebo than on 6g a day of vitamin C (*BMJ Mil Health* 2020;bmjmilitary-2019-001384).

An important meta-analysis of 9 controlled studies found that taking extra vitamin C on top of regular supplementation at the onset of a cold shortens the cold by a significant 56% and significantly relieves symptoms (*Biomed Res Int* 2018 ;2018:1837634).

🍄 **COVID BONUS:** Several studies show that vitamin C helps COVID. Vitamin C significantly reduces death from any cause in people with COVID (*Inflammopharmacology.* 2023 Apr 18:1–6). Vitamin C with arginine significantly reduces severity of long COVID (*Pharmacol Res.* 2022 Jul 19: 106360).

### Zinc Lozenges

Zinc lozenges are remarkably effective. A research review found that when at least 75mg of zinc lozenges a day was used, people got better significantly faster in 7 out of 8 studies (*Open Respir Med J* 2011;5:51- 58).



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THIS BEAUTIFUL HERB IS AS VALUABLE TODAY AS IT WAS IN ANCIENT TIMES

The wise men brought gifts that suggested that frankincense is as valuable as gold. So, give yourself the wise gift of frankincense, or boswellia as it is herbally known.

If gold is the answer to inflation, boswellia is the answer to inflammation. And, as one of nature's most magical anti-inflammatories, boswellia is emerging as one of the most promising answers for pain.

Three of the areas of greatest promise are back pain, osteoarthritis, and Chron's and colitis

One of the greatest challenges for conventional medicine has been to come up with a safe solution for pain. Nature may have done what the pharmacy has struggled to do. Boswellia is a very safe and very powerful anti-inflammatory.

### Back Pain

Musculoskeletal pain is very common. It can cripple you in your back, in your neck and in your knees. For musculoskeletal pain, boswellia often partners with curcumin, another potent anti-inflammatory. Two studied stand out.

The first gave people with musculoskeletal pain either acetaminophen or the boswellia/curcumin combination. 66% of the herb group had a fast positive response after only 6 hours. 73% of the drug group had responded by then, but by days 3 and 7, the two treatments were equally effective. The herbs were 8.57 times

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## Lifesaver: Ashwagandha Calms Stress & Anxiety

This double-blind study gave 50 people experiencing stress and anxiety either a placebo or 500mg of ashwagandha root extract standardized for 2.5% withanolides for 60 days. Stress, anxiety and quality of life improved in everyone taking ashwagandha compared to those taking placebo. Cognition scores also improved significantly with ashwagandha for multitasking, concentration and decision taking time (*Medicine (Baltimore).* 2023 Oct 13;102(41):e35521).





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better at improving the “unpleasantness and emotional aspects” of acute pain (*Medicine (Baltimore)* 2020;99(28):e20373).

The herbs worked well. But they also worked fast. Since it is sometimes claimed that herbs work well but work more slowly than drugs, researchers put that aspect of the boswellia solution to the test.

The study included 232 people with exercise-induced acute musculoskeletal pain. Their pain had to be 5 or greater on a scale of 0-10. 80% of them registered pain levels between 7 and 9. 70 of them had lower back pain, 22 had shoulder pain, 20 had knee pain, 22 had lower body pain, and the other 98 had other types of pain, including neck, limb, joint, soft tissue injury, widespread musculoskeletal pain or other.

The double-blind study gave each of them either a placebo or 1000mg of the herbal combination, standardized for 266mg curcuminoids and 10mg acetyl keto-boswellic acid. They were given their treatment just one time. The question was, How well will the herbs work and how fast?



Photo by Ted Snider

Six hours after being given the herbs, there was a significant 97.85% improvement in pain intensity compared to a paltry 2.46% in the placebo group.

The herbs worked fast. 99% of the people given the herbs had noticeable pain relief at only 68.5 minutes, and 96% had meaningful pain relief at 191.6 minutes. That noticeable pain relief came 4.98 times faster than with placebo, and the meaningful pain relief was 1.87 times faster. The pain relief was highly significant and continuous.

The combination of curcumin and boswellia was as safe as it was effective. There were no adverse events (*Medicine (Baltimore)*. 2022 Sep 2;101(35):e30144).

A third study of this combination on people with exercise-induced acute musculoskeletal pain demonstrated very fast and effective pain relief in all areas studied, including head and neck, upper limb, lower limb, trunk and generalized body pain (*Scholars Journal of Applied Medical Sciences March* 2022;10(3): 311-326).

Boswellia, with a different partner this time, can also help back pain caused by compressed intervertebral discs. When your discs compress that causes friction and



compression on the nerves. And that causes pain.

A study compared standard management of spinal elongation and flexibility, back pain, and disk mobilization exercises with the same therapy but with boswellia and gotu kola added. Adding the herbs added to the benefit. Height and spine length as well as disc space and disc density increased significantly more in the herb group. And, again, it worked faster. The people who added the boswellia and gotu kola also had significantly greater improvement in symptoms and mobility, and they needed significantly less pain medication. They also missed less work.

The researchers made the striking conclusion that adding boswellia and gotu kola doubles the effectiveness of standard therapy (*Panminerva Med.* 2022 Mar;64(1):48-55).

### Osteoarthritis

In addition to being anti-inflammatory, boswellia also prevents decreases in cartilage production. That makes it ideal for osteoarthritis, as a number of double-blind studies have shown (*Phytother*

2003 Jan;10(1):3- 7; *Arthritis Res Ther* 2008;10(4):R85; *Drug Metabol Pers Ther* June 8, 2020;35(2)). A recent systematic review and meta-analysis of 7 controlled studies has now confirmed that boswellia safely and significantly improves pain, stiffness, function, maximum walking distance and activities of daily living (*BMC Complement Med Ther.* July 17, 2020;20(1):225).

But, even better, an important study has shown that boswellia not only improves the symptoms of osteoarthritis, it improves the osteoarthritis. Boswellia is able to reduce an enzyme that degrades cartilage by 46.3% (*Arthritis Res Ther* 2008;10(4):R8).

That means that boswellia can actually stop the progression of the disease. A recent study showed that 169.33mg of boswellia extract, standardized for 87.3mg b-boswellic acids, taken twice a day for 120 days, significantly improves pain, stiffness, physical function, inflammation and quality of life. Most remarkably, though, the boswellia actually reversed the osteoarthritis: X-ray imaging showed an increase in the space between the knee joints and a decrease in spurs. The boswellia accomplished all this safely, producing

no adverse events (*Phytother Res May* 2019;33(5):1457- 1468).

### Crohn's & Colitis

Colitis is an inflammatory bowel disease. So, can boswellia's anti-inflammatory powers help here as well? boswellia not only helps, it helps at least as well as the drugs. When people with ulcerative colitis were given either the drug sulfasalazine or boswellia extract, remission rates were 75% in the drug group but 82% in the herb group (*Eur J Med Res.* 1997 Jan;2(1):37-43). A second study also found that boswellia is more effective than sulfasalazine with remission rates of 70% versus 40% (*Planta Med.* 2001 Jul;67(5):391-5).

Boswellia has also been shown in double-blind research to be nonsignificantly superior to the drug mesalazine for Crohn's. The researchers concluded that mesalazine is “the state of art in treatment of active Chron's disease” and that, given boswellia's safety, it “appears to be superior over mesalazine in terms of a benefit-risk-evaluation” (*Z Gastroenterol.* 2001 Jan;39(1):11-7).

## SPOTLIGHT: Curcumin for Indigestion

Turmeric and its active ingredient, curcumin, is one of the natural supplements enjoying the greatest growth in scientific support for its medicinal benefits.

### What We Knew

Curcumin is a powerful anti-inflammatory with many surprising benefits. A little known application of this herb is its traditional use for digestive problems like gas and bloating. Turmeric increases the output of bile, which can help digestion.

An early study showed that, while 53% of people with indigestion improved while taking a placebo, as significantly greater 87% of those taking turmeric did (*J Med Assoc Thai* 1989 Nov;72(11):613-20).

### What's New

Since then the news has gotten better. Curcumin is not only better than a placebo, it's at least as good as the drugs. Two recent studies have put curcumin up against the drug omeprazole for indigestion. Omeprazole is a protein pump inhibitor that is commonly used for indigestion, but it has a long list of drug interactions and side effects.

Indigestion affects 10-20% of all people. If

there is no known cause for your indigestion, like an ulcer, it is classified as functional dyspepsia.

In the first study, 132 people with functional dyspepsia were given either omeprazole, curcumin or a placebo for 4 weeks. On the



Severity of Dyspepsia Assessment (SODA) score, curcumin was significantly better than placebo for pain and non-pain symptoms. Curcumin was also better than omeprazole, but the difference was not significant. That means that curcumin is at least as good as the drug. What's more, though again not significant, satisfaction scores and health related quality of life scores were greater in the curcumin group (*J Gastroenterol Hepatol.* 2022 Feb;37(2):335-341).

In the most recent study, when 151 people

with functional dyspepsia were given either 20mg of omeprazole or 2g of curcumin or both for 28 days, there was significant improvement in all 3 groups on the Severity of Dyspepsia Assessment (SODA) score in pain, non-pain and satisfaction categories. There was no significant difference between groups, meaning that the curcumin works just as well and, this new study added, there is no benefit to adding the drug. But, again, though the difference was not significant, improvement in satisfaction with treatment was greater in the curcumin group (*BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine Published Online First: 11 September 2023.* doi: 10.1136/bmjebm-2022-112231).

Taken together, these studies make the case that curcumin, a very safe natural supplement, is at least as effective as omeprazole for functional dyspepsia: good news for people with indigestion!



### Three More Reasons to Eat Whole Food

Processed foods make up 50% of the diet in the west and 70% for kids and lower income households. Here's 3 reasons to choose whole foods.

People who eat the most ultra-processed foods (UPF) have a significant 44% higher risk of dementia (*J Neurol.* 2023 Oct 13. doi:10.1007/s00415-023-12033-1).

People who eat the most UPF have a 20% higher chance of coronary heart disease, 18% higher risk of cardiovascular disease and 17% higher chance of ischemic stroke (*BMC Med.* 2023 Nov 3;21(1):415).

People who eat the most UPF have a just shy of significant 10% increased risk of breast cancer. Each 10% increase in processed food led to a significant 5% increase in risk of breast cancer. *Front Nutr.* 2023 ;10:1250361

### Reducing Asthma by Increasing Nutrients

A new study has found that asthmatic children have significantly lower levels of zinc, selenium and vitamin D. Children with uncontrolled asthma had significantly lower levels of all 3 than children with controlled asthma.

This study hints at an important role for zinc, selenium and vitamin D in the prevention and treatment of childhood asthma.

*Cureus.* 2023 Jun;15(6):e41082

## Ageless

### Herbs that Keep Your Brain Young

42% of all seniors experience the mild cognitive impairment (MCI) that affects memory, thinking, judgement and language. MCI affects quality of life and increases the risk of dementia.

There are no drugs for MCI, but there are herbs. Ginkgo, saffron and Panax ginseng have all been shown to help. So, what happens if you put them together?

A new double-blind, placebo-controlled study has shown that 12 weeks of the powerful herbal combo significantly improves delayed episodic memory retrieval and cognitive switching, indicating improved memory and executive function.

So, the combo of ginkgo, saffron and ginseng actually improves memory and cognition while you age in people with MCI.

*Alzheimers Dement (N Y).* 2023 Oct-Dec;9(4):e12420.