

Echinacea And The Common Cold

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Sample of Content:

What does science say about echinacea and the common cold, and what does this reveal about the prejudice or ignorance of some of these teams? Learn more here.

Content:

Every year, as the winter months approach, we go out and spend million on various concoctions to ward off the dreaded common cold. In recent years, the most popular of these has been Echinacea, a natural substance that we are told will reduce the likelihood of us catching our cold, and will relieve our symptoms if we do catch one. The idea of using a natural form of cold relief is very appealing, particularly for parents looking for a mild, organic remedy for young children; an age group particularly susceptible to colds. And the science behind Echinacea? We are told it boosts the immune system and increases production of white blood cells which fight foreign bodies such as viruses in our bodies. But does Echinacea really work? Are those that take regular supplements of this substance any less likely to catch a cold than the rest of us, and will they have milder symptoms when they do? Research has proved inconclusive on these

questions, but some studies do seem to indicate that the benefits of Echinacea are far less than we are led to believe. According to these studies, echinacea doesn't seem to have any preventative properties, as those who take this regularly are just as likely to develop the common cold when exposed to the virus. When Echinacea is taken after a cold has developed, it may decrease the duration of the illness by a couple of days, and possibly also reduce the severity of symptoms such as headaches, sore noses. A relatively large dose is needed, however, to achieve these effects, and symptoms such as coughs and swollen lymph glands are unaffected. In children, some research shows that Echinacea doesn't have any noticeable effect at all, even when taken in large doses after the symptoms of a common cold become apparent. In fact, some children develop an allergic reaction, such as a rash, when given large doses of Echinacea, so you should probably avoid this completely. So is the idea that Echinacea could cure the common cold a complete myth? The answer is not that simple. The problem with the studies that have been roundly critical of echinacea is that they do not use a standardized extract of echinacea in a dose that is considered to be therapeutic. If you take a drastically weakened concentration of any regular drug and administer it at doses that are significantly less than therapeutic, you are not going to achieve clinical results. It also allows you to make claims about needing a 'huge dose' to achieve clinical benefits. The reality is that clinical benefits do occur when the dose is concentrated at the appropriate level. Only when scientists start comparing apples with apples will there be meaningful results on herbal medicine such as echinacea.

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About the Author:

Vitamin C is another popular supplement used to beat symptoms of the common cold. Learn more about the different types of vitamin C available here:

<http://www.vitaminstohealth.com/vitamin-c.html>