

YOUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

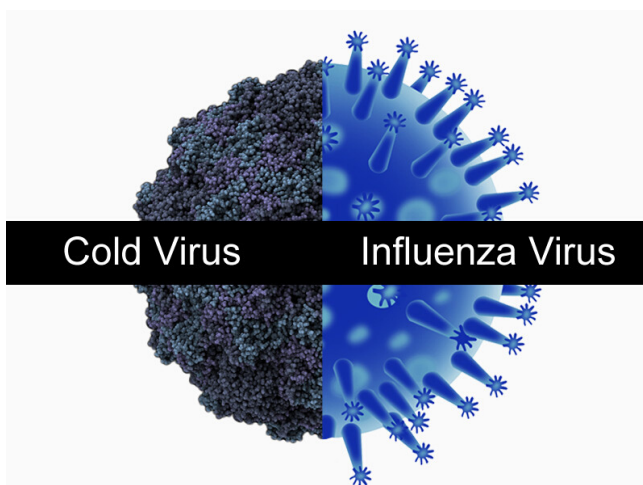
FEBRUARY 2020 VOLUME 2 ISSUE 11

Exploring Alternatives to Medicine During the Cold/Flu Season

What do studies say about Elderberry, Vitamin D, and Vitamin C?

First and foremost, it is important to know that the studies of elderberry, vitamin D, and vitamin C were never intended to replace the flu vaccine. To date, the flu vaccine continues to be the safest preventative option that is recommended yearly by the CDC. *See previous newsletter for more information on the flu vaccine.*

You may have seen the recent hype in the news with elderberry extract. According to several studies dating all the way back to 2003, elderberry extract has shown significant benefits during the flu, reducing the days of illness by more than half, if started within the first 48 hours of illness or when symptoms first appear. At this time, elderberry is not FDA approved and continues to be studied. Currently, it is not regulated. There are many variations being sold. Some formulas may not be pure elderberry extract and may contain other additives, such as echinacea. It is important to consult with your physician and pharmacist regarding trusted brands, dosage, and to ensure it will not interact with other medications you are taking. Sambucol elderberry appears to be the most widely



COMMUNITY EVENTS NEAR ROCKFORD

**Wheeling Warriors
Meetup LBBRG**
2/19/20 12:00-1:00 PM

**Caregiver's Table
LBBRG**
2/26/20 4:00-5:00 PM

**Kentwood Activity
Center**
2/26/20 7:00-8:00 PM
For 13 & Under Free

**Adaptive Sports
Kentwood Parks & Rec
Leisure Club**
*Contact Katelyn
bushk@kentwood.us to
obtain schedule details
and other winter events*

Caregiver's Series
5/1/20 5:30-8:00 PM
5/2/20 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Exploring Alternatives (continued)

studied and is classified as a dietary supplement, sold in pharmaceutical stores. Elderberry has a mild diuretic and laxative effect. In the studies reviewed, there were not any reports of diarrhea or adverse effects, however it is still possible to experience side effects if given with other medications that may have interactions. Hence, it is not safe to make your own. You also should not expect to get the same therapeutic effects from elderberry jams.

When a virus enters your body, it latches on to your healthy cells, infects them, and causes these infected cells to reproduce the virus. Elderberry works in two ways.

1. The antiviral mechanism blocks the ability of the virus to further invade other cells.
2. The antiviral mechanism deactivates the virus in the infected cells, preventing further replication of the virus.

In reviewing the effects of vitamin D, a study from 2010, concluded that there are immunity benefits to keeping your vitamin D levels above 38 ng/ml, reducing the incidence and severity of acute viral respiratory illness by one half. Before going out to purchase a vitamin D supplement, you should have your levels checked and have a conversation with your doctor to obtain safe dosing recommendations and regularly monitor your levels. Too much Vitamin D can lead to toxic levels of calcium and phosphate, which

could be dangerous.

There are many variables to getting enough vitamin D. It depends on how much sunlight exposure you get, your skin tone, your body mass, and your diet. Unfortunately, there are not enough food sources that provide adequate amounts of vitamin D. This is why milk products, orange juice, and other breakfast foods are processed with vitamin D supplementation. Lighter skin tones tend to have higher levels of vitamin D.

How does vitamin D work? Vitamin D stimulates production of cells with antimicrobial properties to suppress inflammation.

Surprisingly, the effectiveness of vitamin C in reduction of illnesses have been variable. Some studies have shown that long term prophylaxis had some impact on the duration of illness, but percentages were relatively small. However, there were significant reductions in duration of illness seen in professional athletes during periods of heavy physical activity.

Vitamin C supplementation has been recommended by many providers for years. The thought process behind it, is that Vitamin C is a strong antioxidant, that inhibits viruses from replicating and stimulates the removal of infected cells. Again, before you purchase vitamin C, check with your doctor on whether it is necessary and what a safe dose is for you.

COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR TC

PWR! Class LBBRG

Weekly Thursdays 4-5 PM

Wellness Exercise Class LBBRG

Weekly Tuesdays 2-3 PM

Caregiver's Table LBBRG

2/18/20 4:00-5:00 PM

Fun and Games LBBRG

2/18/20 4:00-5:00 PM

PNN Support Group

2/4/20 6:00 PM Foster

Family Community Health
Center

2/27/20 10:00 AM Senior
Center

TBI Support Group

2/11/20 5:00 PM Foster

Family Community Health
Center

Susan Mast ALS

Bethlehem Lutheran
Church

2/12/20 2-3:30 PM

GT Stroke Club

Presbyterian Church

2/12/20 2:30-4:30 PM

Amputee Support Group

Disability Network of

Northern MI 2/12/20 5:45-
7:00 pm

Cabin Fever Break

Challenge Mountain

Adaptive Recreation

2/22/20 10 AM - 3 PM

RSVP 231-487-0800

References:

- Bezsheiko, V. (2017). The effectiveness of vitamin C in the prevention and treatment of common cold: what is the current evidence base? *Psychosomatic Medicine and General Practice*. 2.
- Klotter, Jule. "Vitamin D and Flu." *Townsend Letter*, October 2010. p. 28+. *Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints*.
- Natural black elderberry extract shortens flu durations by half. (2003, Dec 10). *PR Newswire*.
- Rosenblatt, S. (2013). Winter warrior. *Better Nutrition*. 2. pp. 24-26.
- Torabian, G., Valtchev, P., Adil, Q., Dehghani, F. (2019) Anti-influenza activity of elderberry. *Journal of Functional Foods*. 54. pp. 353-360.