

REVEALED: the hard cold truths

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CHICKEN SOUP & LEMON

REMEDY: "I drink chicken soup with lemon juice in it. The combination of flavors is unexpectedly delightful, and has been the solution to many colds in my family."

— Stacey, 24, Long Island

REALITY: "There's some evidence that suggests that chicken soup has anti-inflammatory qualities. It basically helps the body's response to a cold by helping reduce dehydration, mucus and congestion."

RATING: ★★★★★



Dr. Steven Lamm reviews everyone's favorite cold comforts — and offers a few of his own.



DOC'S DOS AND DON'TS:

- Do blow your nose one nostril at a time. Don't continually sniffle.
- Do stay three feet away from people around you for the duration of the cold.
- Don't get close because the symptoms are at bay.
- Do take a hot shower for

symptomatic relief. Don't stay out in the cold too long.

- Do drink tea with lemon and eat soup. Don't drink soda.
- Do take 1,000 mg of Estrace green tea daily. Don't take antibiotics.
- Do sleep in and skip work. Don't go to the gym.

REALITY: "The anti-oxidants in vitamin C help to modulate your immune reaction to the virus. A virus

isn't toxic to the person's tissues, like the flu is, but the body doesn't know that, so it attacks

it — and that's what makes you feel sick."

RATING: ★★★★★



VODKA STEAM

REMEDY: "My grandma taught me that the best thing to do is boil some water with vodka, put your face over it while your head is covered with a towel and inhale the steam. It may be that I always feel relief because I'm drunk, but it works!" — Sara, 25, West Village

REALITY: "I have mixed feelings about this one. The steam may be helpful, since the virus hates it, but the

problem is the alcohol. I'd say the reason she loves this remedy is because alcohol is a tranquilizer. She's probably just sleeping through the symptoms!"

RATING: ★★

EMERGEN-C

REMEDY: "I put a packet of Emergen-C into every cup of tea I brew. Double good for me!" — Lisa, 30, Chelsea



NETI POT

REMEDY: "A Neti pot works like a charm. It's a little freaky, because it feels like you are drowning, and

it's a little gross — because you're clearing your nasal passages with a bunch of water and salt — but it definitely helps speed up recovery." — Amanda, 33, SoHo

REALITY: "It's a good idea. It's a decongestant, so it helps you generally feel better, especially if you have sinus issues."

RATING: ★★★★★



CHINESE HERBS

REMEDY: "I went to this acupuncturist and she gave me these 'Yin Chiao' herbs from Kamwo Pharmacy. I laughed at first at 'magic herbs,' but now I swear by them every time I start to get a sore throat. And almost every time it prevents it!" — Katie, 37, Harlem

REALITY: "There's little evidence that supports herbs. But if it has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory properties, it's likely to mildly improve the symptoms. The caveat is what the risk of the herb is. How safe is it and are you willing to take the risk for mild benefits? I don't know."

RATING: ★

ZICAM

REMEDY: "Zicam is the only cold remedy that actually works. Whether I use the nasal swabs or the rapid melts, it shortens the length and severity." — Louise, 24, Lower East Side

REALITY: "Zinc has been shown to have anti-viral properties and in some studies, if taken very early, to reduce severity and duration of illness. The problem with this is that many people aren't taking it early enough. You have to start it within the first 12 hours."

RATING: ★★★★★



MILK & GARLIC

REMEDY: "When I was young, my Polish baby sitter taught me to drink warm milk mixed with lemon and garlic. It tastes like crap, but I think helps." — Marie, 29, Upper West Side

REALITY: "Garlic is anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory, and the milk is just for hydration. It is odd, but it has health-promoting properties. I'm impressed