

## **Colds and influenza: a review of diagnosis and conventional, botanical, and nutritional considerations**

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The common cold is the leading cause of doctor visits in the United States and annually results in 189 million lost school days. In the course of one year the U.S. population contracts approximately 1 billion colds. Influenza infection is still a leading cause of morbidity and mortality, accounting for 20-25 million doctor visits and 36,000 deaths per year in the United States. Conventional therapies for colds and flu focus primarily on temporary symptom relief and include over-the-counter antipyretics, anti-inflammatories, and decongestants. Treatment for influenza also includes prescription antiviral agents and vaccines for prevention. This article reviews the common cold and influenza viruses, presents the conventional treatment options, and highlights select botanicals (*Echinacea* spp., *Sambucus nigra*, larch arabinogalactan, *Astragalus membranaceus*, *Baptisia tinctoria*, *Allium sativa*, *Panax quinquefolium*, *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, *Andrographis paniculata*, olive leaf extract, and *Isatis tinctoria*) and nutritional considerations (vitamins A and C, zinc, high lactoferrin whey protein, N-acetylcysteine, and DHEA) that may help in the prevention and treatment of these conditions.