



# Literature Review and Commentary

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## Elderberry and raspberry for influenza

Sixty Norwegian patients (aged 18-54 years) suffering from influenza-like symptoms for 48 hours or less were randomly assigned to receive, in double-blind fashion, 15 ml of a syrup containing extracts of black elderberries and red raspberries (Sambucol®) or placebo four times per day during meals for five days. Symptoms were recorded daily using a visual analogue scale. The mean time until complete or almost-complete symptom relief occurred was 3.1 days in the group receiving Sambucol and 7.1 days in the placebo group (56.3% reduction in symptom duration;  $p < 0.001$ ). No side effects were reported.

**Comment:** Sambucol is a commercially available preparation that has been shown to inhibit the replication of various strains of influenza virus *in vitro*. The results of the present study confirm earlier preliminary research indicating that this preparation can decrease the duration of symptoms in people with influenza. Considering its apparent lack of toxicity and moderate cost, Sambucol should be considered for first-line treatment of influenza. It would be interesting to determine whether elderberry/raspberry extracts are also active against avian influenza viruses (bird flu).

Zakay-Rones Z, et al. Randomized study of the efficacy and safety of oral elderberry extract in the treatment of influenza A and B virus infections. *J Int Med Res.* 2004;32:132-140.

## Cold-cocking a cold with intravenous nutrients

A 40-year-old male came to my office with a cold and a one-day history of fatigue, nasal congestion, and runny nose. He was given an intravenous infusion containing 3.5 g of vitamin C, 600 mg of magnesium chloride hexahydrate, 1.5 ml of 10% calcium gluconate, 1,000 mcg of vitamin B12, 100 mg of vitamin B6, 250 mg of dextranthenol (a form of pantothenic acid), and 1 ml of "B complex 100" (which provided 100 mg each of thiamine and niacinamide and smaller amounts of other B vitamins). By the end of the ten-minute infusion, he was symptom-free and full of energy. The symptoms did not return until the next day, at which time they were only about ten percent as severe as before the injection.

**Comment:** I have administered various modifications of the above injection (typically referred to as the Myers cocktail) to about 100 patients with acute upper respiratory tract infections (URIs). Approximately 15%-20% of the patients had the same immediate and dramatic results experienced by the patient described here. Another one-third felt considerably better by the next day, whereas about half of the patients did not appear to benefit from the treatment.

There is no obvious way to predict who will benefit from the Myers cocktail the first time they receive it. However, most patients have had a similar response to subsequent treatments as they did from the first one. Therefore, if a patient's upper respiratory infection (URI) does not improve significantly from this injection, there is little reason to repeat it the next time he or she develops a URI.

While high-dose oral vitamin C may reduce the average duration of a cold by about 30%, it is not possible to obtain the rapid results with oral dosing that one can achieve with intravenous administration. Apparently, the high serum nutrient concentrations that occur with intravenous injections result in unique biochemical effects. My experiences administering 15,000 intravenous nutrient injections over a 17-year period are summarized in the article cited below.

Gaby AR. Intravenous nutrient therapy: The "Myers' cocktail." *Altern Med Rev.* 2002;7:389-403.

## Grapefruit for periodontal disease

Fifty-eight patients (mean age, 45 years) with chronic periodontitis were assigned (apparently without randomization) to consume two grapefruits per day for two weeks ( $n = 38$ ) or to serve as a control group ( $n = 20$ ). Prior to treatment, the mean plasma vitamin C concentration was significantly lower in these patients than in healthy controls. The sulcus bleeding index improved significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) in the group eating grapefruit, but did not change in the control group.

**Comment:** These results suggest that regularly eating grapefruit can reduce gingival bleeding in patients with chronic periodontitis. This improvement may be due in part to the vitamin C content of grapefruit. However, studies using vitamin C alone to treat periodontal disease have produced conflicting results. Grapefruit also contains a number of different flavonoids, and previous research has shown that the combination

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