

THE REAL CURE FOR STOMACH FLU

A catchall phrase for *gastroenteritis*, "stomach flu", is an acute inflammation of the lining of the stomach and intestines characterized by nausea, vomiting, abdominal discomfort and diarrhea. It is usually caused by a viral or bacterial infection.

When medical doctors treat gastroenteritis, they recommend bed rest, bland food and lots of fluids. They typically prescribe antibiotics when patients have high fevers. After a few days of symptoms, most people recover -- or so they think. If gastroenteritis is treated conventionally, you may fail to *fully* recover. *Here's why*: The organisms that cause the infection also inflame intestinal membranes, and vomiting and diarrhea may have eliminated both the "bad" and "good" bacteria found in the intestines. This is a setup to make you more susceptible to repeat infections.

Limit your diet. To rest the gastrointestinal tract and speed healing, drink chicken or vegetable broth and eat baked apples and/or pears (the pectin in these fruits soothes the stomach and helps stop the diarrhea) until your symptoms abate. Avoid dehydration by consuming at least 72 ounces of water per day while you have the flu. Also, drink chamomile, peppermint, ginger, black or green tea. These teas have antinausea and antivomiting properties. Make a strong tea using two tea bags per 12 ounces of water. Drink three to six cups daily, preferably on an empty stomach.

Use a mustard poultice. This will relieve nausea and vomiting. *What to do*: Combine one tablespoon of mustard powder with one cup of flour. Stir in enough water to make a smooth paste. Saturate a piece of cotton cloth about the size of a facecloth with hot water from the faucet, wring it out and spread the paste over the cloth. Place it (paste-side up) over your abdomen. Cover with a dry cotton cloth, and then a hot water bottle or heating pad. Leave the poultice in place for 30 minutes. Apply twice a day.

Take an herbal tincture. Clinical trials confirm that the herbs Oregon grape root and geranium have antimicrobial properties, while slippery elm and licorice reduce inflammation and promote tissue growth in the intestine. Make a mixture of equal parts of these tinctures, which are sold individually at most health-food stores. Take 60 drops of the combined tinctures in two ounces of water, on an empty stomach, four times per day for up to five days.

Try probiotics. *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifidobacterium bifidum* replenish "friendly" bacteria in the bowels. Probiotics are available at health-food stores in powder, liquid or capsules. Take 10 billion colony-forming units (CFUs) each of L. acidophilus and B. bifidum in four divided doses daily for the duration of the illness and for three weeks after your symptoms have resolved.

**If you would like more information, please contact
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