

New Woman®

SHE'S JUST LIKE YOU

WAYS TO
FIGHT WINTER
**SKIN
WOES**

HOW TO
HANDLE
**SIBLING
RIVALRY**

5

PLACES TO
CATCH THE
**NEW YEAR
SUNRISE**

THE
Party Issue



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WHILE LAPPING UP THE WINTER SUN IS A GREAT IDEA, THE COLD SEASON ALSO BRINGS WITH IT A HOST OF AILMENTS SUCH AS BRONCHITIS, ASTHMA, COUGHS, AND COLDS.

BINDU GOPAL RAO

LISTS EFFECTIVE NATURAL REMEDIES THAT WILL HELP YOU BREATHE EASY THIS WINTER.

Old World Cures for Winter Ailments



Come winter and the nip in the air is palpable. However, along with this come ailments of the season such as bronchitis, asthma and others. In fact, any chronic pulmonary disease—asthma, chronic bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), interstitial lung disease (ILD) tend to exacerbate more during winters. While being on medication is important, there are also numerous home remedies that can help. Wondering what? Read on to know more.

WINTER WOES: BRONCHITIS, ASTHMA, PERSISTENT COUGH AND COLD

What causes it: The main causes of winter ailments such as bronchitis and asthma can be traced to environmental issues including smog during winters and air pollutants. The genotype or make of certain individuals who have a predisposition to respiratory tract infections can get negatively impacted because of this. A persistent cough and cold causes vasoconstriction leading to bronchitis and asthma. Predominantly, the environmental and aetiological factors known as *Shwasa* in Ayurveda texts in winter can be attributed to increased industrialisation, chemicals used in various factories, overpopulation and pollution. Ayurveda describes *Kapha Dosha* as the primary cause of winter ailments. “This *Kapha* causes blockage (*Strotorodaha*) in the respiratory system (*Pranvaha Strotas*). As a result, breathing becomes stressful and the rate of respiration is increased,” says Dr Kaveri Kuttappa, Program Director (Integrated Clinic) at Wellbeing Integrated Medical Centre (a unit of Aurazia Wellness Pvt. Ltd.).

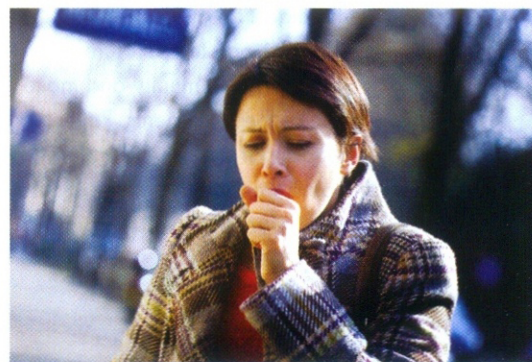
The airways in our respiratory system are lined with a thin sheath of liquid that helps to breathe smoothly. “When we breathe in dry air, that fluid evaporates much faster and is not easily replaced. This leads to the airways becoming irritated and swollen, which worsens the symptoms of existing conditions like asthma and bronchitis. Cold air can also cause histamine production which facilitates the symptoms of an allergic response thus, leading to wheezing and coughing which can further worsen these conditions. Cold has a tendency to increase mucus production. Mucus is a good thing; it lines the respiratory airways and helps trap dirt and bacteria that may enter the body along with respired air. However, cold can lead to excessive mucus production which is thick and stickier than usual. This can lead to blockage in the airways and may give rise to infections as well,” says Dr Shikha Sharma, Founder, Dr Shikha’s NutriHealth.

What you can do:

1. **Include hot substances such as ginger and pepper:** Including hot and pungent food substances in your diet such as ginger, black pepper, cinnamon etc. and staying away from cold substances will be a major help. It is also a good idea to finish dinner by 7 PM. “Also, consume honey and turmeric and milk to avoid the increase of *kapha* in the body.

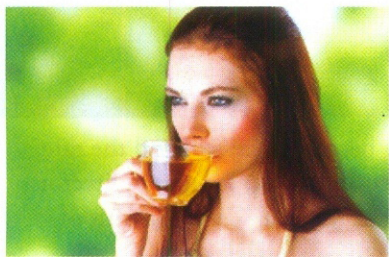
YOUR WINTER HEALTH CHECKLIST

- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid smoking
- Avoid contact with chemical-based scented candles, air fresheners, deodorizers etc., it may enhance the symptoms
- Practising breathing exercises such as *pranayama* and *sudarshana kriya* will strengthen the respiratory system and prevent respiratory illness.
- To add moisture to the air, use humidifiers at home
- Eat almonds in any form
- Exercise in the early morning sun (*Suryanamaskar*)
- Rinse your hands and face frequently during this season



GOOD FOOD CHOICES FOR WINTER

- Include whole wheat bread, fresh corn, black gram, milk, citrus fruits, amla, (*emblica officinalis*) vegetable oils, meat soups, ginger and sugar cane products in your daily diet.
- Stay away from cold foods and raw salads as they are difficult to digest.
- Always drink warm water as this helps maintain normal body temperature and aid in the digestion of food. A little drop in body temperature can lower body immunity and make you prone to ailments. Patients suffering from arthritis and joint pains are more benefited by the consumption of warm water.



Using steam therapy to clear sinuses using simple eucalyptus oils, menthol oil can help too," advises Dr Imran Patel, Head of R & D (Health Care), Netsurf Communications (P) Ltd.

2. **Using immune-enhancing spices to cook:** Cooking your food with immune-enhancing and digestive spices such as cumin, fennel, coriander, turmeric, ginger and black pepper is known to help. Herbal teas combining lemon, ginger, mint with hot water are also an effective remedy for cold and coughs.
3. **Make a concoction with simple ingredients:** Onion juice mixed with honey is a great way to get rid of chest congestion and cough. "Keeping a clove in your mouth reduces dry cough. Chewing tulsi leaves combats wet cough. Pepper and honey reduce irritation in the throat. Inhaling smoke from a dried root of turmeric relieves chest congestion. Gargling with rock salt in warm water soothes cough and prevents infection from going into the lower respiratory tract," says Dr. Kaveri.
4. **Know your herbs:** The trick to a healthy winter is to keep your immunity strong. Since immunity according to Ayurveda is connected with digestion, when digestion is strong, immunity is strengthened. "Liquorice (*Mulethi*) is beneficial for a sore throat, congestion and mouth ulcers. It contains powerful phytochemicals such as flavonoids and saponins. It has anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory and anti-ulcer properties. *Mulethi* improves the immunity and also aids in stimulating the brain. It has antioxidant properties and it prevents the liver from the action of free radicals. It can also be used in acidity, heartburn and constipation. *Mulethi* can be taken in powdered form with water and it can also be taken with honey. Liquorice tea is also beneficial for cough and cold," avers Dr Shikha.

LOOK WHERE YOU TREAD

While these home remedies are generally safe, it would be wise to bear the following in mind:

- Remain under the guidance of your physician if symptoms like breathlessness and flu do not reside with the use of these home solutions.
- Do a patch test before you use any herbs or pack on your skin to understand if you are sensitive to any ingredient.
- Do not overdo these remedies. Using them twice a day should be enough. "However, it is advised to reduce the portion size as children require smaller doses. You can either try reducing the frequency or a number of such remedies when administering them to children. One more important point to be noted here is that you should be vigilant about any allergies that a child might have. Many of these are natural products derived from plants, some children may harbour allergies to some of the ingredients so be careful about it," advises Dr Shikha.

So, for a safe winter, all you now need is to follow these simple remedies and continue to do a regular follow-up with your pulmonologist. **Nw**

