

RECIPES & REMEDIES

How to Tango with Viruses

By Dr. Martha Libster

The best way to stay ahead of viruses' effects on your body is to dance! The viruses that cause the common cold, other respiratory illness, and influenza (cough with fever) do not intend to waltz or foxtrot. Their movement pattern is more like a tango. You must be the leader in this tango.

So, remember this:

1. The viruses' purpose is to weaken you. They move into a part of the body and try to "set up house" there. This process drains energy from that part of the body. Then bacterial infection can set in. If you treat the bacteria, you are trying to take the lead with the wrong partner. Your goal is to take the lead with the virus, keep it moving so that you maintain your strength and the virus doesn't invite bacteria over to make you "sick." The virus will always try to take the lead, going from one part of the body to another. As a nurse I have witnessed how numerous people, young and old who, when they get a cold or flu (with or without fever), can go about their daily activities. They take rest periods and may not do as many tasks as usual, but they don't necessarily "get sick" and have to stay in bed. Most people enjoy an active energetic life and slowing down to deal with a virus is preferable to getting "sick" and being bedridden. In other words, antibiotics and/or herbs used as antibiotics are not the best steps in the virus tango. The keys to tango with a virus are REST and comforting self-care.
2. Remember that viruses move and therefore the focus of your remedies will move and change as well. You must be ready for the movement, listening to your body so that you will sense the earliest signs of the virus moving and taking the lead.

Early signs include itch, heat, discomfort, irritability, sneeze, headache, constipation, fatigue, loss of appetite, scratchy throat.

3. Studies have shown that viruses like to “grab” humans in the naso-pharynx or back of the throat area. Other studies by early 20th British physician Dr. Edward Bach demonstrated that viral illness begins in the large intestine.
<http://www.bachcentre.com>
4. My grandma Sally always said that colds “go out your big toe.” As a child this sounded funny and perhaps meaningless. But Gramma’s wisdom often sticks to the cells of the heart and brain and now I can agree that there is evidence for what she was saying. Try observing this for yourself.

If you are strong enough to take care of yourself or need minimal assistance, consider these comforting self-care tips for taking the lead in the human-virus tango when you sense the virus in the following areas of your body. (If you are weak, please seek the help of a health practitioner. The healing process often requires willingness to accept help from others!)

1. Head and Throat

- Rest for 15-minute periods every 3 hours.
- Drink fluids.
- Gargle with original Listerine. It has thymol (thyme) as its main ingredient. Thymol has anti-microbial properties. Gargling moves the lymph fluid in the neck and places the thymol right where the viruses like to grab. Lymph is the body defense system and its power is in movement.
- Chamomile flower steams for sinus pain.
- Mullein Flower ear oil – place on edge of cotton square into the ear at first signs of ear stuffiness or sore throat in children especially. Viruses cause inflammation in the mucous membranes of the throat and Eustachian tubes (tubes to the ears). The inflammation causes swelling and irritation and then pain and/or difficulty breathing. Remember to treat the ears and protect them from any wind.
- Stop eating tonifying (body building) foods such as dairy foods and sugar. You may find that salty foods such as crackers and miso soup not only cut through the excessive mucous (body trying to get rid of virus) but also strengthen the body.
- Stop eating citrus. Oranges are not picked when they are fully ripe and eating citrus significantly changes the acid-base balance in the body. Viruses thrive in acid environment. Sugar and citrus create cellular environments that make great places for viruses to thrive.

- Take 500-1000 mg of vitamin C. This is a water-soluble vitamin so if you take too much for your body, you will experience loose bowels. That is one way of discovering that you have taken more than you need. However, if constipated (virus flourish in the bowel), taking vitamin C can help you take the lead in the virus tango.

2. Chest

- Keep your chest warm. Use proper clothing and hot water bottle to stay warm.
- Tiger balm or Ginger essential oil (in a carrier oil such as sweet almond oil) applied to chest. Keep covered.
- Cough syrup with thyme as major ingredient. There are products on the market that are very helpful, such as the syrup by the Swiss company Olbas.
- Grapes – green/white grapes for yellow (hot) sputum and red grapes for clear or white (cold) sputum.
- Elderberry syrup – especially for influenza. Please see Recipe and Remedy “Advice from the Elder.”

3. Belly

- Room temperature enemas are a time-honored remedy especially for fever and constipation.
- Eat lightly – clear soups, crackers, grapes, mashed potato or noodles.

4. Back and Limbs

- Viruses often leave the head, throat and chest and then attempt to lodge in the back muscles or limbs. When the head and chest clear, folks feel so much better they think the tango is over – but beware! If you have weakness, pain or discomfort days to weeks after a viral illness, get back on the dance floor. Think movement...massage, baths, exercise such as walking in the woods or a botanical garden. Electro-magnetic therapies such as acuscope or myopulse can help too if you have access to a practitioner who uses these therapies.

5. Skin

- Healers have known for centuries the value of keeping the pores in the skin open during colds and other viral illness. Viruses are shed through nasal secretions and through the pores. Keeping the pores open is critical to keeping the virus on the move – out of the body.

- Sip yarrow tea in bed with a hot water bottle by your feet.
- Take a hot bath or sauna – the sweat happens during and afterward. Please get some coaching before trying this if you have not done before.
- Avoid drafts, especially in air-conditioned spaces, by using shawls and light blankets. This is a key preventive measure, especially on airplanes.

Take all remedies intentionally and mindfully. Taste, feel, and smell your remedies. Feel how the remedy affects your body. Sense where the remedy is helpful to your body. Please send love and gratitude to the elements, such as the plants and water that aide you in healing.

Remember the old adage: the measure of health is not how many times you get sick but how quickly you MOVE through illness.

May you TANGO this season's viruses out your big toes and then join me in seeing them go all the way back to the sun where they can be burned up. We all have important work to do as we build a global caring community. It might be a different world if human beings used their energies to TANGO with each other rather than with viruses. Then again, maybe the viruses play an important role in the movement of human evolution.