



Elderberry: A Natural Remedy for Colds and Flu



Research shows black elderberries (*Sambucus nigra*) can help us avoid illnesses like the common cold and influenza. And, they can help speed recovery time for those who already have them.

What Is Elderberry?

Elderberries are the fruit from the elder bush that are harvested in the fall. There are a few varieties of elderberry but the one most commonly used for health benefits is the European variety, black elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*). They grow most commonly in woodlands and are found in Europe, Western Asia, North America, and North Africa.

The History of Elderberries¹

<https://www.thekinnardhomestead.com/resources/the-complete-guide-to-elderberries/>

Elderberries (*Sambucus nigra*) have been part of the Mediterranean herbal tradition for thousands of years. In ancient Greece, elderberries were known not only for their medicinal benefits but for their sacred associations. The Greek physician Hippocrates (c. 400 BCE), widely regarded as the “Father of Medicine,” praised the elder tree as his “medicine chest”, owing to its wide variety of healing applications.

The Greeks used elderberries and elderflowers in tonics, teas, and poultices. Healers believed that elder could reduce fevers, soothe coughs, and cleanse the body of impurities. Its dark berries, harvested in late summer, were boiled down with honey and spices to produce a thick syrup that could be preserved through the cooler months—an early version of what many still use today.

Greek herbal wisdom influenced Roman medicine as well. Dioscorides, a Greek physician serving in the Roman army during the first century CE, wrote extensively about the elder tree in his seminal work *De Materia Medica*. He recommended elderberries for treating inflammation, chest congestion, and even skin eruptions.

The legacy of elderberry traveled with Roman expansion into Europe and beyond. Over time, elder trees became a fixture in European folk medicine, appearing in the gardens and hedge lines of early monasteries and village apothecaries. When settlers journeyed to the New World, they brought the elderberry tradition with them—only to find that Native American tribes were already using local species of elder for similar purposes.

Benefits of Elderberry

Elderberries naturally have vitamins A, B, and C and stimulate the immune system. They also contain antioxidants, phenolic acids, flavanols, and anthocyanins. Both the berries and the flowers contain these nutrients in differing amounts.

Elderberries contain more antioxidants than blueberries, cranberries, goji berries, and blackberries, making them an obvious choice for immune support and free radical control.

Israeli researchers found elderberries pack a punch when it comes to colds and flu. Their complex sugars are clinically shown to help support the immune system. It can cut recovery time in half or better!

Dr. Madeleine Mumcuoglu, of Hadassah-Hebrew University in Israel found that elderberry disarms the enzyme viruses use to penetrate healthy cells in the lining of the nose and throat. Taken before infection, it prevents infection. Taken after infection, it prevents spread of the virus through the respiratory tract. In a clinical trial, 20% of study subjects reported significant improvement within 24 hours, 70% by 48 hours, and 90% claimed complete cure in three days. In contrast, subjects receiving the placebo required 6 days to recover.

Source for Elderberries: <https://mountainroseherbs.com/elder-berries>