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# PLANET HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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## PROMISING HERBS IN THE TREATMENT OF COVID-19

Herbs have not received the same kind of attention from the scientific community for COVID-19 as have the more famous vitamin C and vitamin D, or even isolated natural compounds like quercetin. Yet, herbal approaches to COVID-19 are certainly worth investigating. Consider that in China, more than 90 percent of COVID-19 patients' treatments include herbal medicine. And in North America, herbal products, especially elderberry, have been flying off the market.

### THE DELICIOUS PROMISE OF CHOCOLATE & TEA

Similar to the pre-clinical studies with quercetin, several flavonoids-rich extracts have shown preliminary promise for fighting COVID-19. Flavonoids from dark chocolate, green tea and

grapes inhibit the SARS-COV-2 virus that causes the virus and uses an enzyme to replicate and assemble itself. While dark chocolate extract was effective, green tea extract was actually twice as effective. These results are based on computer modeling and lab studies and have not yet been studied in humans. But, like quercetin, these studies offer the hope that these and other flavonoids-rich extracts might be beneficial for COVID-19.

### LICORICE, ECHINACEA & CURCUMIN

One of the first herbs to show promise for COVID-19 was licorice root. That is not surprising given that licorice is an important antiviral and anti-inflammatory herb - both important properties for dealing with COVID-19. Glycyrrhizin, an important

component of licorice, has been shown to plug the ACE2 receptors that the SARS-COV-2 virus uses as a doorway into human cells where it takes over the cell's machinery allowing it to replicate and do its damage. More recent studies have found that glycyrrhizin may target the ACE2 receptor and prevent SARS-COV-2 entry.

Echinacea is one of the most popular herbs for supporting the immune system. It enhances the immune response to a viral infection, while also modulating the immune system to prevent the excessive release of inflammatory cytokines - all valuable abilities for fighting COVID-19. Most promisingly, a recent cell study found that a readily available **Echinacea purpurea** herb and root preparation demonstrated antiviral activity against the SARS-COV-2 virus.

Curcumin is an herbal anti-inflammatory agent that may play a role in the excessive inflammatory response seen in COVID-19 similar to its potential in sepsis. Curcumin also has antiviral activity and can nearly triple levels of cathelicidin antimicrobial peptide, or CAMP. CAMP is a protein that helps the immune system to fight off infections from pathogens that the body has never been exposed to before - an intriguing power when faced with a "novel" coronavirus. For its combination of anti-inflammatory and antiviral effects, Curcumin has been suggested as a potential herb for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19.

## NEWSLETTER SPOTLIGHT



### BLACK CUMIN SEED

**Nigelia sativa** is also known as black seed or black cumin. Black seed is antiviral, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and immune modulating, all of which make it an interesting candidate for COVID-19. Several computer simulation studies have found that a number of components of black seed can attach to cell receptors and potentially inhibit SARS-COV-2 replication.

The people in the study had moderate or severe COVID-19. They were given either a placebo or a combination of honey and 80mg of black seed per kg of body weight in two to three divided doses for up to 13 days.

The results were impressive. The people in the black seed and honey group got over their symptoms significantly faster than the placebo group. People with moderate COVID-19 symptoms recovered from their symptoms in six days versus 13 in the placebo group. By day eight, 98.13% of the people with moderate symptoms were asymptomatic versus 56.31% of the control group, and significantly more people with severe symptoms were now asymptomatic while the placebo group has only improved to moderately symptomatic.

There was a significant advantage for the supplement for all symptoms tested, including fever, cough, shortness of breath and inflammation. Black seed also let people get back to their normal lives faster.



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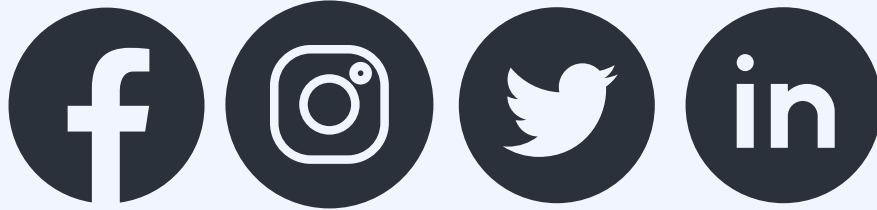
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