

Prevention and treatment of the common cold: making sense of the evidence

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF THE COMMON COLD

Prevention and Treatment of the Common Cold Although incidences of the common cold are quite recurrent and somewhat harmless, it yields a relatively discomforting situation. Basically, the common cold is a viral infection of the upper respiratory tract, the nose, and the throat. However, the common cold is manifested through a number of varying symptoms owing to the fact that it can be caused by over 200 viruses. Nonetheless, some of the common symptoms of the common cold include a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and watery eyes among others. Similarly, the common cold has a wide range of available treatment options other than administration of antibiotics which is quite ineffective due to the fact that the common cold is caused by a respiratory virus. One of the common treatment approaches used is administration of vitamin C. Although vitamin C has been used for relatively many years, there is need for more exploration in a bid to determine its efficacy as a treatment of the common cold.

Over the years, the role of vitamin C as preventative and therapeutic agent of the common cold has gained prominence thereby expanding its application considerably. However, ingestion of vitamin C can be as either a regular or a therapeutic supplementation with both having significant effect on the common cold. As a regular supplementation, ingestion of vitamin C has an 8% effect on adult and 14 % effect on children in relation to the common cold (Hemilä and Chalker, 2013). However, the efficacy of vitamin C is greater with proportions greater than 1 gram per day in both adults and children. In fact, research studies have shown existence of a direct relationship between increased efficacy of vitamin C and increased regular

ingestion. Moreover, intake of vitamin C does not only reduce the duration of the common cold but its severity as well. For example, a research study on a group of 674 marine recruits shows a 2% reduction in the common cold duration and 5% reduction in severity (Hemilä and Chalker, 2013).

Conversely, there have efforts and studies seeking to determine the effect of vitamin C on the common cold as a therapeutic supplementation.

Nonetheless, therapeutic supplementation faces some sense of discouragement especially considering the fact that vitamin C has no effect on incidence of common cold on the general population. Nevertheless, there are still some considerations on use of vitamin C on the basis of therapeutic supplementation due to the benefits accrued to reduced severity and duration. Results from several research studies tend to suggest that administration of vitamin C as a therapeutic supplement is more effective when administered for longer periods, more than five days. Additionally, vitamin C as a treatment of the common cold is more effective when administered soon after the onset of the symptoms. This implies that timing is a crucial factor in determining the efficacy of vitamin C as a treatment measure for the common cold.

Conclusively, occurrence of the common cold is relatively high and can be manifested through several symptoms. However, there are also significantly many treatment approaches among which ingestion of vitamin C is quite common. However, effectiveness of vitamin C as a treatment is dependent on several factors such as timing and age. For instance, use of vitamin C has greater success on children compared to adults and it is more effective when administered at the onset of the common cold symptoms. Although use of

vitamin C has little effect on the incidence of the common cold on the general population, it has been found to have significant impact on the duration and severity of the cold. Therefore, use of vitamin C as a common cold treatment measure is considerably effective and advisable also considering the fact that it is relatively cheap and harmless.

Reference

Hemilä, H. and Chalker, E. (2013 May 31). Vitamin C for preventing and treating the common cold. Cochrane.