



# Elderberry

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The father of Western medicine, Hippocrates, called the elder tree his “medicine chest”. The traditional uses of the fruit of the elder tree include treating rheumatism, improving bowel function to aid detoxification, action as a mild diuretic, cardiovascular protection, and stress reduction, all in addition to its proven antiviral and immune-enhancing properties.

Austria produces, by far, the majority of the world’s elderberries, not only for nutraceuticals, but also for jams, juices, yogurt, and wines. It can be used safely as a tonic for the prevention of many diseases. Having thousands of years experience as part of folk remedies, potent antioxidant activity, and no demonstrable toxicity except for rare allergic reactions, taking elderberry extract for reasons other than just immune stimulation can be safely recommended.

The powerful purple pigment has a chemical term: anthocyanidins. These pigments have antioxidant, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulating properties. Whether taken as a syrup (Sambucol) or as a tablet (Wellness Elderberry Extract), if taken within 48 hours of the onset of “flu” symptoms, elderberry will decrease the length and severity of symptoms by over 50%. This means a recovery hastened by over four days. The use of elderberry for the treatment of flu is the only indication for its use supported by double –blind, placebo-controlled randomized clinical trials. At the earliest onset of influenza, begin the consumption of elderberry and high dose of vitamin C, and continue for at least five days.

The “traditional” uses for elderberry include its use as a gastrointestinal tonic for aiding healthy elimination. Scientific data documents its prevention of LDL cholesterol oxidation and the protection of the lining of the arteries, known as endothelium, from oxidative stress. This would support the role of elderberry as a cardiovascular tonic. Preliminary trials also indicate that elderberry significantly modulates the bio-markers of stress when people are placed under stressful conditions. This would support traditional claims for the role of elderberry in the “balancing of emotions”.

Elderberry is the most proven treatment we have for flu. Whether its role as a health tonic will be “proven” by science may take decades. In the meanwhile, you can experience whether or not it works for you without concerns of toxicity.

Your Journey to Health and Healing,  
Gary E. Foresman, MD

## References:

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