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### **Zinc Lozenges Can Reduce Severity of a Cold**

(Harrisonville MO) - The common cold... wouldn't it be great if you could take an over the counter treatment that could reduce the number of days and the severity of your suffering. New research shows that zinc can keep the cold virus from replicating – which can reduce the time you suffer by almost 50%!

“The catch is that you must begin the zinc treatment AS SOON AS SYMPTOMS appear and you must take a dose of at least 13.3 mg up to 8 times daily for the first couple of days after symptoms appear,” says Susan Mills-Gray, Nutrition/Health Specialist with University of Missouri Extension. The zinc is best taken as a throat lozenge or nasal gel. “These mediums allow the zinc to come into full contact with the back of throat allowing the zinc to reduce the cold virus replication,” Mills-Gray adds.

Shopping tips:

- Make sure the supplement is made from zinc gluconate or zinc acetate
- Avoid flavorings made from citric acid and tartaric acid – these interfere with zinc's antiviral action
- The safe upper limit intake is 40 mg daily – this is why most zinc supplements recommend only using up to three lozenges (39.9 mg) per day. But using the larger dose (106 mg) daily as indicated by research is considered safe for a couple of days. ONLY continue such a high dose for longer than a couple of days IF your care provider has prescribed this level.
- There can be side effects with a short-term, high dose of zinc: stomach upset, unpleasant taste in mouth, interference with copper absorption and impaired absorption of some antibiotics. Long-term dosages of 100+ mg daily may lower levels of good cholesterol, suppress immune function and actually increase the risk of prostate cancer.
- Zinc nasal gels may cause temporary to permanent loss of smell, as well some people experience pain in the nose immediately after use.

For more information contact your local MU Extension Center or this faculty member directly at mills-grays@missouri.edu.

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