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Elderberry syrup - immunity boosting, antioxidant packed holistic medicine

By Madison Margaret

My mom has made and bottled elderberry syrup for years. She has used one recipe, in which I made a plant based substitution - maple syrup or agave nectar in place of honey.

¾ cup of dried elderberries

3 cups of water

1 teaspoon of dried cinnamon or 1 cinnamon stick

1 teaspoon of dried cloves or 4 whole cloves or 1 drop of clove essential oil

1 tablespoon of fresh ginger or 1 teaspoon of dried ginger or 1 drop of ginger essential oil

1 cup of maple syrup or agave nectar

In a large pot, bring the elderberries, water, cinnamon, cloves and ginger to a boil.

Careful not to burn! Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer until the liquid has reduced by half, about 40-45 minutes. Allow the liquid to cool, remove off the stove. Drain the liquid using a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth, over a large bowl. Press out all the liquid, by pressing a wooden spoon against the berries. Add agave into the elderberry liquid, and be sure to mix well. As long as it is stored in an airtight glass container, it can last up to two months and should be refrigerated once it is opened.

Benefits of Elderberry Syrup:

- Contains antioxidants, which help support a healthy immune system
- Can combat cold/flu season naturally, in place of OTC cough syrup
- Helps to prevent sickness
- Anti Inflammatory
- Can help to clear sinus and chest congestion
- Promotes healthy gastro-intestinal health
- Can calm GI issues such as IBS, acid reflux and indigestion
- Fights against both viral and bacterial infections
- Fights cancer
- Helps to promote healthy skin glow
- High in vitamin C & vitamin A
- Fast acting as it is a superfood and easy to digest

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One con is that elderberry syrup is expensive - even when made homemade! Take one dosage a day to help prevent wastage. Most recommendations include a teaspoon a day.

Original recipe:

<https://happyhealthymama.com/homemade-elderberry-syrup-recipe.html>

ON THE TOPIC OF WELLNESS

Ingredients found in vitamins/supplements that are not vegan

- Gelatin
- Fish oil
- Digestive enzymes such as pepsin or lipase
- Collagen
- Bee pollen
- Joint pain medications such as chondroitin, glucosamine, hyaluronic acid
- fillers/coatings such as glycerin, carmine cochineal, caprylic acid

Although some vitamins & minerals are sourced from animals, such as certain lipids, variations of vitamins B and D, and digestive enzymes, there seems to be a plant-based source or substitution that provides the right vitamins without being sourced from animals.

A general rule of thumb for any vitamin/supplement consumption is to allow, every once in a while, to take a break from your routine of taking vitamins/supplements. This will allow for optimal absorption & will keep you from reaching toxic levels of vitamin consumption. No matter how clean the ingredients are, sometimes the body just needs a break from processing and breaking down capsules. Water soluble vitamins (such as vitamins A, C, E and K) tend to clear out of the body quicker than non water soluble vitamins (for example, vitamin B).

To avoid taking capsules and supplements focus on consuming mostly super foods and other wholesome food that are clean, organic, and not over cooked. Juices and shots made from vegetables, spices, fruit and citrus are also great sources of vitamins, but lack fiber, protein and healthy fats.

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Superfoods:

- **Berries** - antioxidants, fiber, vitamins A and C. Consuming berries helps to decrease your chances of heart disease, cancer, auto-immune diseases and also decreases inflammation
- **Avocado** - packed with healthy fats, fiber, potassium, and monounsaturated fats
- **Leafy greens** - vitamins A, C, B, E and K. Also provides ample amounts of magnesium, iron, potassium, and calcium.
- **Nuts** - antioxidants, protein and healthy fats. Can provide vital nutrients needed to sustain good health. Also can provide long term energy.
- **Tomatoes** - contains high levels of vitamin C which supports healthy immune function and healthy skin. They contain high amounts of potassium and they are very hydrating.

Other nutrient dense foods:

- **Black beans, legumes, chickpeas** - packed with protein & healthy fats
- **Broccoli & cauliflower** - excellent source of fiber and vitamins A, K, C and B.
- **Whole Grains** - protein, long term energy
- **Kale** - protein, vitamins A, C, B, E and K. Provides vital minerals and metals such as magnesium and iron.
- **Hemp seeds** - supports healthy endocrine function. Great source of healthy fats
- **Chia** - contains high levels of protein and can help to draw out toxins from within the body.