

Homemade Cough Drops

By Joseph Parish

Being sick during normal periods of peace can really get a person down but imagine being ill during a time of major national crisis. Nothing can be worse than coughing continuously and having it raise havoc with your throat. Unfortunately, in the event of an infrastructure failure you cannot simply rush to your nearest drug store and purchase something that would sooth your throat. In that case we have provided you with the next best thing - how to make your own cough drops in the comfort of your home. I would seriously suggest that you make several batches before the balloon goes up so that you are familiar with the technique and the procedures for creating this valuable medical necessity.

The next time you encounter a cold or flu reach for this recipe and create some useful concoctions with the addition of some carefully selected herbs. Herbs have some very potent healing properties and they have been used for medical purposes for hundreds of years. In fact, you can find some herbs to be just as strong as many pharmaceuticals. The results you find here are sure to surprise you. As you create these cough drops keep in mind that they are all natural and should present no harm to anyone using them.

Commercially available lozenges come in a vast number of different flavors, strengths and effectiveness. You can easily duplicate just about any commercially created product by following the instructions provided below. As a simple hint you are well advised to err on the side of less rather than on more. You can always increase your next batch to make them a bit more potent or perhaps a trifle bit sweeter.

In general, these cough drops can be made in any flavor or color that appeals to you. You can use an individual herb or a combination of your favorites all rolled up into one. Any homemaker who has made candy will readily tell you that in order to create hard candy you must use sugar and flavoring. This opens up a world of possibilities with using some of the health-related teas such as made by Yogi Tea, Celestial Seasonings, or other herbal tea manufacturers.

That's right you heard me correctly. The cough drops that I am about to instruct you on creating are nothing more then sugar and a healthful blend of herbal tea. That's the bare basics. Now you could get fancy and add sugar substitutes which would be an excellent idea in the event you or someone you know is diabetic. You can easily modify the color of your lozenges by the addition of various color combinations made with nothing more than food coloring. Additional flavors can be made by including extracts which are available at any good craft store which supplies candy and cake makers. Lastly, you are afforded the opportunity to create a custom blend of herbs that you have previously found to be of benefit to you.

When brewing your tea or herbs you will want to ensure that your tea is as strong as possible. Generally, by placing four tea bags into two cups of water you can achieve the necessary strength. If that seems too strong for you then try using two teabags only. Always use boiling water and seep your tea for at least 15 minutes. Add the resultant tea to the sugar at a rate of 1-part tea liquid to an equal part of sugar. You may use a bit more sugar if you desire a sweeter cough drop however using less will make it just about impossible to reach the stage where you could crack the candy for packaging. When making your candy mixtures add the sugar to the tea of your choosing and heat over a med-high flame. Continue to stir until all of the sugar is dissolved and then bring to a boil once again but this time you do not want to stir it. Using your candy thermometer measure the temperature. The use of a candy thermometer is an excellent tool for making these cough drops after all they are made the same as common hard candy. Once the thermometer has reached the 300-degree mark, remove it from the heat. A word of caution at this point, as you heat your candy you will notice that it takes a considerable amount of time to get the temperature to 250 degrees however once it reaches the 250 mark it takes but a few seconds to arrive at the 300-degree spot. Keep your eyes on the thermometer at all times. If you intend to include coloring and flavoring do so now and stir it gently.

You are now ready to pour the completed mixture into the candy molds. You can utilize powdered sugar for your candy molds as well as a coating on your finished candy to keep them from becoming too sticky. Sprinkle the powdered sugar on your molds to make it easier to remove the candy. After pouring the candy mixture allow it plenty of time to set and harden. When you remove your lozenges drop them immediately into the powdered sugar and shake them around. Wrap them in cellophane or place them in a sealed container.

A few useful herbs are as follows.

Camphor acts as a perfect herbal remedy to relieve congestion.

Echinacea is an excellent cold fighter and anti-bacterial agent.

Eucalyptus will relieve congestion resulting from the flu or a cold.

Fenugreek is an age-old expectorant.

Ginger has been known as a pain relieving and antiseptic agent for hundreds of years.

Goldenseal is a good antiseptic and will stimulate the immune system.

Horehound is a pain reliever but caution is advised as this item can be extremely strong.

Juniper has a reputation for relieving congestion

Licorice is an anti-viral fighter and is an excellent choice for chest or throat soothing.

Peppermint acts as a decongestant.

Sage is your typical sore throat remedy.

Yarrow reduces fevers and fights inflammation.