

# unbalancing

making the most of real life

## Immune boosting elderberry gummies

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Winter can be a wonderful time for home projects, snuggly down time, working on the indoor to-do list (leftover from last winter), garden planning...but once I became a parent it was flu season, first and foremost. Once you get your ingredients, this is a simple and fast recipe for immune boosting gummies that are perfect for everyone in the family. When the toddler gets a runny nose or we know we've been exposed to something icky, I start handing these out at every meal. They are also totally customizable in terms of ingredients, as long as you maintain the ratios of liquid: gelatin (about 1 cup: 6 tablespoons).

### What you need:

- gelatin ([here's](#) what we use)
- elderberry juice (see discussion on sourcing below)
- raw honey
- a lemon
- a persimmon (or other fruit or berries)
- ginger and turmeric
- a good mixer (we use a vitamix but anything heavy duty should work)



### **Benefits, Sourcing, and Substitutions**

Elderberry has long been used for immune support in northern Europe and now allopathic medical studies also support these findings ([here's](#) a synopsis). While it's not often found on grocery shelves, the organic Biotta brand can be easily ordered for you at any natural grocer, and probably some conventional ones as well (just ask at customer service, it's sold by UNFI and they supply pretty much any store that sells natural products). It is shelf stable and keeps well in the fridge once opened, so split a case of 6 bottles with friends, it's about \$7 a bottle and lasts a long time. This is something I like to always keep on hand since it is concentrated and can be taken straight for colds and flu.

You can also check a local farmers market or ask local farms, sometimes people sell elderberries and you can make your own. Here in the NC piedmont region, [Honeysuckle Tea House](#) sells them in season, frozen and dried. You can also grow your own or harvest them wild, if you are confident of proper identification.

*But if you can't find elderberry juice just substitute blueberries.*

Fresh ginger and turmeric can be found at most natural grocers and Asian markets. Ginger is one of the central basic ingredients of food-based immune support and turmeric is a powerful anti-inflammatory. Peeling them is a pain. I do it in large batches and preserve in brandy so it's always on hand. Organic turmeric is hard to find, and what most grocers have is irradiated (which mattered to me because I was trying to sprout it). I've gotten it at farmers

markets and more reliably from [Azure Standard](#). Starting a few years ago I began growing it myself, and that's what I used here.

Asian persimmons are around at farmers markets and natural/specialty grocers in fall, but the only reason it's in here is because I have Fuyu persimmon trees in my garden and a fridge full of fruit at this time of year. They are high in vitamin A and C so fit the recipe well. Often native persimmon trees can be found out and about if you know what to look for.

*If you don't have persimmon, just use an orange, grapefruit, or berries.*

I was in a hurry (snot already everywhere) so didn't add many ingredients, but why not? Add some broccoli or kale or leafy greens if your eaters can handle it. A bit of cilantro would have been delicious. You could mix in a powdered probiotic after letting it cool a bit.

### **What You Do:**

1. Blend the items that can be heated up:
  - Peel the lemon and remove seeds, add (freeze the peel to use for zest later!)
  - Rough slice the persimmon, remove any seeds (often there are none) and add (there's no need to peel them, just remove stem parts)
  - Add 1/2 cup of elderberry juice



1. You should have 3/4 to 1 cup of smoothie-like liquid. Pour most of it into a small sauce pan and turn on med-low
2. Add 5 or 6 tablespoons of gelatin (depending on about how much liquid you ended up with) and whisk well. Small amounts of liquid heat up fast so keep it moving.



1. Simultaneously, add a fat piece of ginger and one of turmeric to the little bit of liquid you left in in the bottom of the blender (about an inch long piece of turmeric, a bit more ginger unless the strong flavor is problematic), along with a smidge more elderberry juice, blend well (this needs a little longer as you really need to liquify the chunks of root, maybe 45 seconds in a Vitamix)
2. When the mixture on the stove seems well melted, remove from the heat and add the ginger/turmeric blend
3. Add 3 to 5 tablespoons of raw honey, depending on how sweet you want it to be (3 was good for the grown ups, 5 makes the 5yo happier), and mix thoroughly
4. Pour it into a glass or stainless steel container, or cute silicone molds if you like. There's no need to grease anything, pop it in your fridge for a few hours (lid off to let condensation out, otherwise the top will be sticky) and you'll be ready to go. They'll be solid at room temp and last several weeks in the fridge.



Happy flu season! April will be here before you know it.