

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Judy Blatman at 202-204-7962

**ECHINACEA MAY REDUCE RISK AND DURATION OF COLDS
—New Meta-analysis Finds Echinacea Cuts Chances of Catching
a Cold by More than Half—**

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 9, 2007 — A new meta-analysis, published in this month's edition of *The Lancet*¹, suggests that taking the herbal supplement Echinacea could reduce the risk of catching a cold by 58 percent and reduce the duration of colds by an average of 1.4 days. This is promising news for Americans who, according to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases², catch 1 billion colds annually.

The meta-analysis combined the results from 14 randomized, placebo-controlled studies to evaluate the effect of Echinacea on the common cold.

“Previous research tended to suggest that Echinacea may reduce the duration or severity of colds,” said Andrew Shao, Ph.D., vice president, scientific and regulatory affairs for the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN). “This meta-analysis reinforces results from previous individual studies showing that Echinacea, in particular the two species examined, *E. angustifolia* and *E. Purpurea*, may not only help reduce the duration, but may also help reduce the incidence of colds.” Dr. Shao pointed to statistics noted in the published meta-analysis article that indicate about 40 percent of lost work time in the U.S. is attributed to symptoms caused by the common cold, stating, “This news about Echinacea’s consistent effect over a series of well-designed studies could have positive implications on some of the economic burdens associated with the common cold.”

CRN noted that this meta-analysis was well-conducted, as the authors used the important and appropriate approach of including in their analysis trials that are considered “combinable”, i.e. those

randomized, controlled trials that were similar in design, involving (with one exception) some form of Echinacea alone, rather than combining studies that individually examined the collective effects of a variety of different herbal or other dietary supplements. In addition, CRN noted that the researchers conducted several separate meta-analyses within the overall review and were able to demonstrate consistent results when the data were analyzed by incidence, duration and whether or not subjects caught the cold naturally or were inoculated with a cold-causing virus.

According to Dr. Shao, “The researchers were very thorough in their analyses and they examined the data in a number of ways and still observed that Echinacea consistently decreased the incidence and duration of the common cold.”

According to the most recent estimates from *Nutrition Business Journal*, Echinacea is the sixth top-selling herbal supplement in the United States.

CRN echoed the call from the study authors for additional research to further evaluate the effects of Echinacea on the common cold.

“We’re very encouraged by this analysis,” Dr. Shao noted. “We hope that this research will lead to longer and larger studies, the focus of which should be to define the optimal dose and duration of Echinacea use needed to address colds.”

###

¹ Shah SA, Sander S, White CM, et al. Evaluation of Echinacea for the prevention and treatment of the common cold: a meta-analysis. *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, 2007; 7: 473-80.

² National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The common cold, health matters fact sheet. <http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/healthscience/healthtopics/colds/overview.htm> (accessed July 2, 2007).

Note to Editor: The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), founded in 1973, is a Washington, D.C.-based trade association representing dietary supplement industry ingredient suppliers and manufacturers. CRN members adhere to a strong code of ethics and manufacture dietary supplements to high quality standards under good manufacturing practices.