

## Strategies for Immune Support

The single, most important thing that we can do to support our immunity and prevent disease is to eat a balanced, whole foods diet. For most people, this means eating more fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts and whole grains. It is believed that nutrients are better absorbed from food than from pills and that foods work synergistically—their health benefits being greater when eaten together than when the foods are eaten separately.

Eat better, exercise more and stress less is the advice we all hear to stay healthy. That is often easier said than done! However, there are some very simple steps you can take to boost your immunity and prevent colds and the flu this

winter. Here are a few ideas to keep your family healthy all season long.

### A healthy diet is the best medicine!

NDs and nutritionists agree that what we eat plays a big role in fighting viruses and preventing infection. Some important foods to include in your diet are:

**Rainbow vegetables:** Broccoli, carrots, beets, squash, kale and purple potatoes contain anti-oxidants and vitamins A, C and zinc that keep our immune system active! Orange foods are rich in beta-carotene which is converted in the liver to vitamin A, which protects our #1 defense system, our skin.

**Spice it up:** Many common spices are known to be anti-microbial, antiviral and antifungal. Garlic, onions, ginger and cinnamon are all used to warm the body and fight infection. Crushed garlic contains allicin, the sulfurous compound that gives garlic and onions their pungent smell and anti-bacterial properties. Crushing raw garlic to release the oils is important to activate the allicin; adding it to the end of cooking is a good way to preserve its immune-boosting properties.

**Mushrooms:** Shiitake, Reishi, and Maitake are commonly used as medicinal agents. Research shows that these fungi can increase our immune system's ability to produce

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an important type of white blood cells called natural killer cells, which in turn cause infected cells to self-destruct.

**Protein:** Lean meat, fish and eggs give us the protein necessary to build and repair body tissues as well as make enzymes and hormones. Protein including beans, nut and seed butters (especially almond and pumpkin) as well as dairy contain zinc which is important in the production of white blood cells—the part of your immune system that is responsible for fighting infection.

## Benefits of exercise

Whole-body movement on a regular basis is important for

optimum health. Our lymph glands are stimulated by the movement of our muscles, which in turn activate our immune system. Physical activity moves blood, lymph and oxygen to surrounding muscles, organs and tissues providing them with nutrients and immune defense. Exercise is also a great way to reduce stress—one of the major factors that can decrease the body's immune function. Yoga and Qi Gong are forms of exercise that help reduce stress while getting a workout.

## Prevent infection

Wash hands often with warm soapy water. Cough into your sleeve. Limit sugar, wheat, dairy and alcohol. Get plenty of sleep. Stay hydrated with water and herbal tea.

## What to do if you do get sick

Load up on vitamins C, D, zinc, and magnesium. Rest, eat soups and drink fluids.

**Hydrotherapy:** Alternating hot and cold to the chest; saunas and baths stimulate blood and lymph.

**Wet sock treatment:** Soak cotton socks in cold water, ring dry; before bed warm feet in hot water for 15 minutes, put damp cotton socks on covered by wool socks. Do nightly for three nights. This stimulates the immune system by sending blood to your feet to warm them and also brings down a fever.

**Nasal rinse:** Flush viruses from your nasal passages—½ tsp non-iodized salt to 8oz warm water in a neti pot or nasal rinse bottle. Tilt

head forward and pour solution into one nostril and let it drain out the other. Repeat on the other side and alternate until solution is used.

**See your doctor:** When you're sick, herbs, IVs, and acupuncture can all quicken your recovery time. We're here to help you.

by Erika Horowitz, ND

### Asian Chicken Soba Noodle Soup

- 2 tsp dark sesame oil
- 2 tsp peeled, diced ginger
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 Tbs chopped green onions
- 6 cups chicken stock, low-sodium broth or mushroom stock
- 2 Tbs soy sauce
- 2 Tbs rice vinegar
- 1 cup shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 2 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cooked and shredded
- 6 oz dry Soba noodles
- 6 oz spinach leaves washed and torn

In large pot, heat oil. Add ginger and garlic and stir-fry for 1 minute.

Add stock, soy sauce, vinegar, mushrooms and chicken. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes.

Add noodles and cook until tender.

Add spinach and green onions, heat 2 minutes more. Salt and pepper to taste. Serves 4 to 6.

## Our People



Founded clinic in 1989. Integrates naturopathic medicine and acupuncture.

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