

HALPERIN CHIROPRACTIC

Keith Halperin, DC

Help for Colds and Flu



Flu season has arrived earlier than usual and promises to stay with us through late spring.

Here are some simple ways to build up our immunity to help prevent or reduce symptoms from the flu and colds coming our way.

What do most of us do 15-20 times per hour? Touch our face. This seems to be the number one way to transmit viruses and bacteria from one person to another.

Increase stomach acid:

Most viruses and bacteria enter our body through touching our mouth, nose and eyes. This makes sense since 70% of our immune system resides in the gut and mucosal cells lining the nose and mouth. The first line of defense is the acidic environment of the stomach. The normal PH of the stomach is about 1.5 to 2.3 PH (PH 7 is neutral while most of the body is slightly alkaline, which is above PH 7). Strong stomach enzymes, called proteases, react along with the acid produced to attack and destroy harmful bacteria and viruses before they enter the gut and bloodstream. Daily stress tends to increase the PH, allowing cold and flu "bugs" to thrive and multiply.

Solution

1. Try taking a teaspoon to tablespoon of apple cider vinegar in the morning and at night to help acidify the stomach.
2. Take betaine hydrochloride (stomach acid) in pill form before each meal.
3. Take digestive enzymes with each meal to maximize your ability to break down proteins, the main component of viruses and bacteria.

Get enough sleep: A recent study of hundreds of college students noted that students who slept less than 6 hours per night showed a 300% increase in colds and flu. Melatonin, the sleep hormone, dampens the output of stress hormones produced by the adrenal glands during busy days. This protects us from adrenal exhaustion, which decreases our susceptibility to colds and flu.

Stop eating sugar! Every time you eat sugar the immune system becomes impaired for hours. Sugar robs us of B vitamins, vitamin C, minerals such as zinc and magnesium, and also antioxidants, all of which are needed as co-factors for a healthy immune system.

Take your probiotics: A University of Massachusetts study found that, while the rate of catching colds was roughly the same among different groups of students, those regularly taking probiotics experienced a decrease in duration (by 2-3 days) and severity of colds, all of which added up to

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50% fewer missed school days. The study noted that probiotics altered the immune system's response by decreasing the severe inflammation common to colds and flu.

Solution

1. Take your probiotics 2-4 times per day. Many studies show that the lactobacillus species (there are many) seem to be best at preventing colds and flu. Many good probiotics are found in the nose and mouth. On their own, good probiotics secrete enzymes that attack viruses and bacteria foreign to the body.

Take your vitamins: If you are deficient in vitamin B (especially B6 and B12), minerals, including zinc, selenium and magnesium (most of us are mineral-deficient), you will lack the ability to build a strong immune system. These co-nutrients are needed for all the metabolic enzymes that attack foreign invaders such as viruses and bacteria. Note: If your stomach acid isn't acidic enough, you will not be able to produce the co-factors necessary to digest minerals or B12.

Vitamin C is not made within our bodies. Many patients increase their vitamin C intake (1000-2000 mg per day) during flu season due to its anti-viral qualities. Natural vitamin C found in fruits and vegetables (remember that vitamin C is removed with cooking) or food source vitamin C such as standard process cataplex C is in my view more potent at a lower dosage.

Vitamin D has so many healthful qualities, and none of us in the northwest make enough vitamin D to fully support our immune system. If blood tests show the need for vitamin d, then there will be a 4-5x increased likelihood of contracting flu and colds. I recommend 2000-5000 IU per day for normal supplementation. There is strong evidence that at the onset of a cold/flu an increase in vitamin D (thousands more IU per day) taken several times during the first few days of illness will reduce the duration and severity of a cold or flu.

Beta-glucans deserve mention for their strong anti-viral capabilities. They are complex sugars, called polysaccharides, found in the cell walls of plants, some yeasts and fungi. I use mushroom extracts that are high in beta-glucans to prevent colds and flu. The extracts are derived from shitake and maitake mushrooms and are especially effective when combined with transfer factors. ([Researched Nutritionals-Transfer Factor Multi-Immune](#)) they upregulate the nk-killer cells that attack, ingest and destroy bacteria and viruses. ***They also prevent the overstimulation of the immune system, which is important in the case of influenza, where the immune response can be severe.***

Transfer factors are actually proteins made by white blood cells. They are the essential immunity boosters found in mothers' milk (colostrum). Taken from a bacteria source, transfer factors act as super-charged colostrum. They fortify the immune system and are believed to speed up the response to viruses and bacteria, which in turn limits the cascade of reactions that promote inflammation.

Selected Herbs

Andrographis paniculata, from an Asian plant, is perhaps one of the most underestimated plant source anti-viral immune boosters and is especially adapted to fighting respiratory infection. It supports a healthy immune response following stress, sudden weather changes and temperature changes. To be effective, andrographis must be standardized to 10mg with a measured amount of

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the active ingredients (measured in hplc). I like Wise Woman Herbals' liquid extract and Mediherb, which combines it with echinacea extract.

Astragalus is a wonderful adaptogen that helps regulate your immune response to viruses. It has been shown to prevent common colds and limit the severity and duration of both colds and flu.

Echinacea sp. is the most widely used western herb for immune support. It is especially good at increasing your resistance to infection and treating upper respiratory infection. There are several species of echinacea. E. Purpurea also inhibits the herpes virus and is effective at inhibiting cold sores associated with colds in some individuals.

Homeopathy

There are several preparations that are safe to use for flu and cold prevention and treatment. They can be especially good for those suffering from any autoimmune disorders and allergies as they act as immune modulators and limit the overreaction of the immune system.

I use homeopathic preparations through Syntrion (Bioresouce) because they muscle-test well against 2012-2013 flu/cold viruses and are safe for most adults and children. They can also be used along with many other herbal preparations.

The three that my patients most commonly use are:

1. **Sy-immune**—taken daily, helps bolster the immune system and prevent colds and flu.
2. **Sy-resp**—helps regulate the cellular processes responsible for preventing or treating respiratory infections. It aids in faster recovery while decreasing the time to heal from infection. It is also effective with some types of chronic sinusitis.
3. **Sy-infect**—used while symptoms are present, reduces the symptoms and duration of colds and viruses.

A final note: There are many more anti-viral supplements available to prevent and treat this year's flu symptoms. Whenever I get a cold or flu I also include at least two servings per day of Ruthies' (my mom) chicken soup. I am not sure how it helps, but it always does.