

## Maintaining your child's immune system by Alexis Touyz

The best way to keep children healthy and have a cold and flu free winter is to have a healthy immune system. Suppressors/stimulators of the immune system key to optimum function. (See charts). So the key to this is to focus on prevention.

A few simple factors like good nutrition, exercise and sleep are necessary. Prevent exposure to extreme weather, dress appropriately. Play Tarzan - beat the chest screaming aahhhh. This stimulates the thymus gland and the production of white blood cells, necessary for an active immune system in children. Encourage coughing into the crease of the elbow instead of the hand and wash hands often.

A whole food, low fat and low sugar diet is tremendously helpful. 10 servings of fruits and vegetables are essential. These serve to alkalize the body as well as provide the body with phyto-nutrients needed for optimum immune function. It is simple to introduce foods into a child's diet which facilitate optimum health and immunity.

Vitamin C is an anti-oxidant and is required in at least 300 metabolic functions, (one of which is the production of interferon, an immune system hormone). The body doesn't make vitamin C. We have to eat it to get it. It is found in citrus fruits, rosehips, cherries, papaya, cantaloupe, strawberries as well as red and green peppers, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, tomatoes, asparagus, parsley, cabbage and sauerkraut. So make your kids a fruit salad and a steamed vegetable medley sprinkled with parsley regularly. Rosehip tea is a fun morning drink

Vitamin B is another vitamin needed for complex enzyme function and immune health. Nutritional sources include eggs, dairy, alfalfa sprouts and sea vegetables, like dulse or nori. Dulse granules can be sprinkled as seasoning on almost all dishes

Essential fatty acids and Omega 3 and 6 are necessary for rebuilding and producing new cells as well as being an indispensable part of the messenger and regulatory processes in the body. Sources include nuts seeds, and unsaturated vegetable oils. Fish, fish oils and flax or hempseed oil are good sources for the omegas, including tuna sandwiches and fish balls breaded in nut flours are an idea or two, to add to the diet. Making vinaigrette with Hemp oil includes a tasty way to ingest fatty acids daily.

Digestive health is important in immune function. Yogurt, with an active culture or acidophilus replaces the friendly bacteria and facilitates digestive health and the absorption of nutrients necessary for optimum body function. Minerals like Magnesium help with detoxification, and zinc which is an immunostimulant, are useful in maintaining our health. They can be found in most red meat and most minerals are absorbed in the intestines.

If you do get sick let the mucus flow; it's nature's way of getting rid of the infection. Do flush the tissues, they contain the germs. Try not to suppress a fever. The body is containing and dealing with an infection (There are certain exceptions)

Herbal Remedies can be used as a preventative and used acutely. A simple immune tonic tea includes Echinacea, Astragalus, and Oil of Oregano. This immune formula helps prevent and recover from moderate illness. Use it either as a tea or in a tincture. Drink the tea 3x/day, or take a combination tincture in water, sipping every \_ hr. Add liquorices which not only sweetens the tea, but also increases fluidity of mucus from the lungs and bronchial tissue. Add Nettle to nourish the body and it acts as an energy changer as well as a digestive restorative. Using Cat's Claw will build and strengthen the immune system. Pau'd Arco is also an exceptional antiviral.

Use Slippery elm and honey for sore throats and coughs. Chickweed is good for fevers, eat it in salad or use a tincture in cool water for dry coughs and hot for sore throats; Garlic chilies and ginger have antibiotic properties and cleanse the system.

Dulse seaweed, soaked for 20 minutes, then cooked for 5 adds flavor to soup, or makes a drinkable broth which has been used as a cure for colds. If this seems unpalatable take lots of liquids in the form of teas and chicken, turkey or miso broth

If these herbal measures seem insufficient then adding certain homeopathic elements can radically reduce the intensity and duration of the symptoms. When using homeopathy it is most effective if you match the most pressing symptom you have to the selected remedy. Generally using only one remedy at a time gives the clearest result.

Aconite - exposure to cold

Belladonna - suddenness of onset

- high fevers

- effects mucus membranes

Drosera - cough

Kali bichromicum - thick yellow ropey mucus

Bryonia - blocked nose, head congestion, dry cough

Ferrum phos - early stages of flu

Dulcamra - nose stuffs up in cold wet weather

Pulsatilla - thick yellow green mucus with absence of thirst

Some people have asked why not simply get a Flu vaccine? The answer is to become informed about the vaccine you're getting!

1. If your child has any allergies, especially to eggs, they are more likely to have an adverse reaction to a vaccine because the vaccine is processed with egg, and children with allergies suffer more unfavorable reactions to the vaccine.
2. The vaccine is made from 3/500 strains of different flu viruses. It's a guessing game. They may or may not have the right strains
3. The validity of the virus is short lived, approx 2 months validity. The vaccine doesn't last the entire season.
4. Let your body work for you. If you get the flu you build the immune systems ability to identify dangerous elements as well as acquiring a life-long resistance to the particular strain.

