



In this issue:

- Protect yourself from infection
- Ten steps to a healthy immune system
- Influenza vaccination facts - so you can make an informed decision
- Immune Boosting Soup

Protect yourself from infection this fall

The immune system is a body wide network of cells and organs that defend your body against foreign invaders (bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites...). Each and every day we are exposed to many foreign invaders. A healthy immune system can identify and remove these foreign invaders. When your immune system is *not* working optimally, foreign invaders have a better chance of surviving in your body.



Signs of a Sub-optimal Immune System

- Fighting an acute infection (e.g. cold, flu)
- Frequent acute infections
- Persistent infection (e.g. Candida, herpes, warts...)
- Unexplained fatigue
- On cortisone or chemotherapy
- Frequent antibiotic use
- Have had many vaccinations
- Frequently exposed to people who are sick
- Having had a recent accident or surgery
- Chronically exposed to toxins (heavy metals, pesticides or organic solvents)

What can my Naturopathic Doctor do to help?

- Provide a dietary analysis and nutritional counseling
- Help you increase your body's ability to remove heavy metals
- Stress reduction
- Provide additional immune support with acupuncture, botanical medicine, homeopathy, counseling, bodywork and mind-body techniques

Ten Steps to a Healthy Immune System

1. Add **flax seed oil** to your food daily to decrease inflammation and to lubricate mucous membranes.
2. Do a **castor oil pack** daily or at least a few times per week. This stimulates your immune system and gives your skin a wonderful healthy glow.
3. **Eliminate sugar** from your diet. 1 tsp. of sugar can depress your immune system function for six hours. Also, to speed recovery make sure to avoid sweet lozenges or syrups when sick.
4. **Get active.** When you exercise, white blood cells (the active cells of the immune system) are dumped into your blood from storage sites in the liver and spleen. A little light exercise is a great way to perk up when you feel like you're coming down with something, and it also directs the blood away from your head, resulting in less congestion.
5. **Wash out your nose.** Using 1 cup of warm water and a half teaspoon of sea salt, pour or squirt the water into one nostril, letting it drain out the opposite nostril or mouth. This helps to tonify the mucous membranes and decrease inflammation and infection when done daily.
6. **Rest.** When you feel run down, have a rest. It takes a lot of energy and resources to maintain an allergic reaction or to fight a cold. Ignoring the illness does not

work to heal you... just bite the bullet and go to bed!

7. **Eat your greens,** and reds and yellows... many colourful fruits and vegetables are needed to supply you with all of the nutrients needed to be healthy. Make sure to enjoy lots of soups and steamed dishes when symptomatic, as raw dishes may make symptoms worse or last longer.
8. **Address imbalance.** Sometimes the body is just out of balance from stress, illness or poor diet, making us vulnerable to a host of problems. See your Naturopathic Doctor to determine your weaknesses and imbalances. Often once these are cleared, so are symptoms and future flare-ups.
9. Use an **air filter** in your bedroom or office. Decreasing air-borne pollutants helps to give your body a chance to heal while sleeping or working. When your body is not exposed to so many chemicals, inflammation decreases and energy increases.
10. Try **warming socks** before bed to help ward off the common cold. Have a nice warm bath, then take a pair of light cotton socks, soak them in warm water, wring them out and put them on. Next put a warm pair of dry, woolen socks over top. Go to bed and get cozy and warm. The drying of the socks helps to move congestion away from your head, helping you to fall asleep in comfort. **Caution:** *This treatment should be used with caution on anyone with decreased or compromised sensation (i.e. infants, elderly and diabetics)*

Naturopathic Perspectives
Dr. Caralei Peters, ND
Dr. Laura Grant, ND

To book an appt, contact:
202-10 George Street
Hamilton, ON L8P 1C8
Tel: 905.528.1661
Fax: 905.528.1991



What is the Influenza Virus Anyway?

Millions of people contract the flu each year and only experience mild symptoms. The incubation period lasts about two days before symptoms of fever, cough, chills, sore throat, body aches, fatigue or headaches appear. Transmission occurs through coughing, sneezing, direct contact with contaminated surfaces or objects, and unwashed hands. People are contagious from the day before symptoms begin until approximately 5 days after illness onset. Children can be infectious for a longer period, and very young children can shed the virus for ≤ 6 days before their illness onset. Severely immunocompromised persons can shed the virus for weeks. Symptoms usually subside after two to three days and disappear within a week. Infection complications (pneumonia, hospitalization, death) are *very* rare and may occur in individuals with an underlying medical condition, those greater than 65 years of age, and young children with a predisposition to respiratory infections

Who's at Risk?

- All people greater than 65 years old
- People with serious long-term health problems especially diabetes, kidney disease, and immunosuppression (people on steroid medications, cancer, HIV), or at risk of developing complications
- Travelers
- Children on long-term treatment with ASA who may be at risk of developing Reye's syndrome
- Individuals with blood disorders (e.g. anemia)
- Children six months or older with respiratory disorders
- Individuals with lung disease (asthma, COPD) and/or heart conditions (angina, CHF)
- Health care workers
- Residents, workers, and volunteers of nursing homes and chronic-care facilities
- Women more than 3 months pregnant during flu season

Contraindications to the Influenza Vaccination

- Persons with an acute respiratory infection or with any other active infection or serious fever
- Individuals who develop anaphylactic type reactions (hives, swelling of the mouth and throat, difficulty breathing, hypotension and shock) to eggs
- Persons with active neurological disorders until they are stabilized
- Those with a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (paralytic disorder)
- Individuals with an allergy to thimerosal (a preservative used in the vaccine)
- History of allergic reactions to the flu vaccine
- Children less than six months of age

Facts about the Influenza Vaccination

- Vaccine is against only specific strains of the virus
- Over 500 different viruses can cause flu-like symptoms. Vaccines are devised using the three most common strains seen the previous year
- The virus is constantly changing
- Two weeks is required to develop sufficiently high levels of antibodies to protect against the influenza virus
- Research suggests the flu vaccine that closely matches the infective strain temporarily prevents the flu in healthy persons less than 65 years old about 70% of the time, while in individuals over 65 years of age the efficacy rate is less than 30%
- Children are at the greatest risk of side effects from the vaccine including: fever, body aches, allergic reactions and potentially a severe paralytic illness

Potential Side Effects of the Influenza Vaccination

- **Local** - soreness, pain, swelling, and a rash at the vaccination site (affecting 10%--64% of patients) that lasts ≤ 2 days
- **Systemic** - Fever, malaise, myalgia (sore muscles), and other systemic symptoms can occur and most often affect persons who have had no prior exposure to the influenza virus antigens in the vaccine (e.g. young children). These reactions begin 6-12 hours after vaccination and can persist for 1-2 days. Febrile seizures are also possible in infants, as the vaccination can cause a high fever
- **Serious** - Immediate --- presumably allergic --- reactions (e.g., hives, angioedema, allergic asthma, and systemic anaphylaxis) rarely occur after the vaccination

Points to Consider

- Formaldehyde, heavy metals (mercury) and chemicals are often used to destroy the virus and create the vaccine
- Vaccinations prevent the body from naturally responding to external pathogens like viruses and bacteria
- A strong and healthy immune system is required to build *permanent* immunity and decrease the potential for developing unknown side effects from exposure to vaccinations
- 90% of people that develop complications or die from the virus are over 65 years

Immune Boosting Soup

- 3 parts Astragalus root
- 3 parts Codonopsis pilosula
- 1 part Lychii berries
- 3 parts Dioscorea villosa

Bring to 2 L of water and then simmer for 45 minutes. Add honey to taste. Drink 1 cup a day during the change of the season (i.e. fall and spring) or just add to a homemade soup. **N.B.** *Persons with skin disorders and autoimmune diseases should not have this soup before consulting with a Naturopathic Doctor.*