

HEALTHY CHOICES

Latest tips on the art of living well.

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Building strong immunity

Avoiding getting sick in the first place is really the ideal situation..... prevention is after all the best cure.



It's that time again where we need to start looking at how we can strengthen our immune system for the up-coming winter ills and chills season. Most of us are all too aware of the familiar signs of falling ill - a sore throat, swollen, runny and stuffy nose, increased mucus production, sneezing and generally feeling like we could sleep for days. These symptoms are a direct result of the body trying to rid itself of the bugs, typically they will last for 3-7 days.¹

While there are many things you can do to help with these symptoms, avoiding getting sick in the first place is really the ideal situation.....prevention is after all the best cure.

Every system in the body - including the immune system will respond positively to adequate sleep, work/life balance, a healthy diet and low stress levels. These are often the trickiest areas to manage every day, but they will yield the best long term health results. Some simple life-hacks to improve these areas and build strong immunity are:

- Go to bed 30 minutes earlier most nights
- Pencil time into your busy schedule to spend with friends, family and loved ones - maybe one night per week for date night and one morning on the weekend for friends and one for family (don't forget to schedule time for yourself too)
- Being organised is the key to eating well - try writing a menu plan for the week ahead and shop to this menu so you know that you have everything you need for healthy meals all week
- Exercise is an excellent stress buster - if you find that too stimulating maybe find a calming Yin yoga class nearby (that can be your 'me time')

If you know that you tend to be susceptible to winter ills and chills or just want to ensure optimal health, then some additional nutritional support may be really beneficial.

Two top supplements that come to mind when thinking of immune support are vitamin C and bovine colostrum.

Vitamin C – this is an essential vitamin that cannot be synthesised in the human body – meaning we must get it through our diet, luckily, it is abundant in fresh fruits and vegetables. During times of stress or infection our concentration of vitamin C in our blood and white blood cells actually reduces² – this is when supplementation can be of benefit. Vitamin C helps to prevent common ills and chills and slightly reduce their duration³ – resulting in fewer days off work and school. Information about how much vitamin C we should take varies hugely – some studies report benefits at as little as 200mg daily – whereas others suggest doses of 10,000mg daily. For preventative purposes a daily intake of 500mg - 1,000mg would be sufficient. If you want to increase your dose, say perhaps you are surrounded by people with ills and chills, then 3,000mg – 5,000mg⁴ taken daily in divided doses throughout the day is likely to be supportive.

Colostrum is nature's first food, the pre-milk fluid all female mammals provide for their infants in the first few days after birth. Colostrum provides vital immune and growth factors and essential vitamins and minerals which contribute to an infant's healthy development, in particular to the development of a responsive immune system. Because colostrum is non-species specific, scientists have found bovine (cow) colostrum may support good health in humans long after birth – from infancy to old age. Bovine colostrum contains highly concentrated compounds including immune components, antioxidants and factors to support healing. Among the immune components in colostrum are antibodies called immunoglobulins, lactoferrin, Proline-rich Polypeptides (PRPs), cytokines and growth factors. Colostrum also contains proteins, vitamins and minerals. Bovine colostrum is known to support the health of our digestive tracts by nourishing the gut wall to promote overall digestive health. A healthy gut wall provides a



natural defence system for the body, for good immunity and resistance to bugs and chills.⁵

If you do get sick remember that it is part of a normal immune response, what's important is how efficiently and effectively our body deals with this attack. Typically you should only feel under the weather for no more than 3-4 days; during this time the most important thing to do is rest up. Recurrent illness or chronic illness such as more than 2 colds per year, secondary bacterial infections ongoing coughs and constant exhaustion may be a sign of a fatigued under-functioning immune system and generally require more than the self-help listed in this article – so get yourself along to a natural health practitioner for more help.

Bibliography

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