***LifeSpring***

**Resources for Hope & Healing**

**Enhancing the Immune System Naturally**

Using natural means to boost the immune system is often the most available and the most effective approach to preventing an infection. Here we present science-validated natural strategies to improve your immune system’s performance.

Please note that natural remedies are not a substitute for medical care. The strategies presented here are safe for most, but if there is an underlying condition such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease, caution is advised. Consult your doctor regarding contraindications, especially if taking medication.

**Immune System Overview – The Body’s Defenses against Viral Invaders**

The body’s immune system is ready to attack harmful invaders through natural killer cells, as well as killer-T lymphocytes, specialized immune cells that destroy viruses and cancer cells. They release chemical bullets that effectively perforate the protein coating of viruses. Natural killer cells also interfere with the replication of viruses. Although different signals actuate these two immune cells, both must be optimally functioning to protect us from super viruses.

Below is an excellent article which provides more detail and includes a number of natural remedies as well:

“How Viruses Work and How to Prevent and Eliminate Them Naturally” <https://www.urologyofva.net/articles/category/healthy-living/4126629/how-viruses-work-and-how-to-prevent-and-eliminate-them-naturally>

**Strategies to Boost the Immune System**

**Engage in a Healthy Lifestyle**

The most important step for optimizing our immune function is to implement daily healthy lifestyle practices that keep the immune system working effectively. These include proper nutrition, adequate exercise and water intake, sunlight, temperance, fresh air, sleep and rest, as well as effective stress management and a firm trust in God. These principles form an acronym, **NEWSTART**, which is expanded here:

**N**utrition:

To enhance immunity, focus on high-antioxidant foods such as berries, plums/prunes, grapes, oranges and kiwi. Antioxidant vegetables include cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, etc.) as well as colorful vegetables such as beets, red cabbage, and dark leafy greens like kale, spinach and mustard greens.

Legumes are also high in antioxidants, especially pinto beans, as well as peanuts. Of the tree nuts, pecans, walnuts and chestnuts contain the most antioxidants. Whole grains such as wheat, corn, brown rice and quinoa are also excellent sources of antioxidants.

All of the foods mentioned above are also good sources of N-acetylcysteine (NAC), which boosts glutathione levels and helps to reduce oxidative stress, thus improving immune function. Selenium is another important nutrient to help raise glutathione levels. One Brazil nut a day will provide enough.

Including zinc in your diet also assists in boosting immunity. Toasted wheat germ, pumpkin seeds, sesame and ground flax seeds, as well as spinach, are excellent sources.

It’s important to avoid refined sweeteners: sugar, honey, maple syrup, etc., as well as fruit juice, as they suppress the immune system. Use stevia instead. A study from Loma Linda University from 1973 looked at the effects of sugar on white blood cells, the powerhouses of the immune system. After fasting overnight, subjects received 100 grams of either fructose, glucose, sucrose, orange juice or honey. Blood was drawn before and after ingestion of the different forms of sugar and then exposed to the staphylococcus bacteria strain. The presence of any of these types of sugar in the bloodstream reduced the immune response significantly; there was about a 50 percent drop in the white blood cells’ ability to surround and fight off the bacteria. Learn more about the role of nutrition & exercise here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IzJbxy9arU>

**E**xercise:

Your body relies on the lymphatic system to remove wastes, like bacteria, viruses, toxins and abnormal cells that can lead to infections and to cancer as well. Exercise boosts the immune system by causing the lymphatic system to flow more effectively in this way: the contraction of your muscles becomes the pump that helps to mobilize lymphatic fluid. Exercising in a pool is especially helpful because of the added pressure from the water. Regular exercise is recommended to increase immunity; a 20-minute walk in the fresh air once or twice a day is very helpful. Excessive exercise can actually cause immunity suppression. Studies show that when marathon runners “give it their all” the immune system is suppressed for about 7 days.

<https://www.mdanderson.org/publications/focused-on-health/exercise-and-the-lymphatic-system.h20-1592991.html>

**W**ater:

When dehydrated, the body has a hard time fighting any kind of infection. Staying well hydrated by drinking at least 6-8 glasses of water a day is vital for combatting illness. More is needed if you are sweating. Consuming half the number of ounces of water that you weigh in pounds (up to about 200 pounds) is a good index to insure adequate hydration. For example, if you weigh 150 pounds, drink about 75 oz. of water, or about 9 glasses. Coffee, soda, milk, fruit juice and tea are not a substitute for water, unless herbal tea, as additional water is required to process caffeine.

The COVID 19 virus tends to collect in the throat, so drinking lots of water delivers virus cells to the stomach where they are killed by gastric acid. (This was included in training given to COVID 19 first responders.)

Not only is water important internally, but it can be very therapeutic used externally as well. Simple hand washing, 20 seconds with soap and water, is one of the best ways to prevent spreading any virus or bacteria. Hydrothermal therapy, the therapeutic use of hot and cold water externally to treat illness, can be a powerful immunity booster. After taking a regular cleansing shower, continue with 3 minutes as hot as tolerable, followed by 30 seconds of cold, repeated several times. Adding friction with your wash cloth adds to the tolerance of cold and enhances the stimulating effect. Stimulating the immune system by increasing the number of circulating white blood cells, this treatment can be done 1-2 times a day, especially at the first sign of illness. When the lungs are involved, as with COVID 19, applying a moist heating pad or a hot moist compress to the chest for 3 minutes while lying down, followed by a very cold washcloth for 30 seconds is an effective treatment as well. Repeat 3-4 times, ending with cold. Discover lessons learned re: Hydrothermal Therapy and 1918 Flu here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v75qipspDvQ&t=1506s>

Gargling with salt water kills germs and can soothe or get rid of a sore throat. If feeling sick, gargling often is recommended. Also, using a Neti Pot morning and evening to irrigate the nasal passages with warm distilled salt water is effective in helping to keep sinuses clear. Use 1/8 t. salt to 1 c. distilled water.

**S**unlight:

The sun’s ultra violet rays are a powerful germ killer. They can destroy the germs on your skin and clothing or anything they touch, as well as actually go through the skin and kill them in your blood stream. Killing germs in the air around us is important to prevent the spread of illness. Allow the sunshine in through the windows of your home when possible, especially the bedroom of someone who is ill.

Vitamin D is produced by the skin when it is exposed to the sun's rays. That's why people call it the “sunshine vitamin”. Adequate vitamin D levels are very important and a blood test will determine if a supplement is needed. Additionally, researchers at [Georgetown University Medical Center](https://gumc.georgetown.edu/) have found that sunlight, through a mechanism separate from vitamin D production, energizes T cells that play a central role in human immunity. Learn more here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-i4bLfiy7lg>

**T**emperance:

Strive for beneficial things in moderation, as has been shown specifically regarding exercise. Moderation in sun exposure is advised as well, as too much can create a carcinogenic effect. Refrain from those things we know to be harmful to the immune system, as in the case of sugar, alcohol, and nicotine.

**A**ir

Fresh, outdoor air assists our body kill germs in our respiratory system, especially important when dealing with respiratory viruses. Also, oxygen from the air we breathe is used to transform the food we eat into energy, which is needed in order to fight disease. So breathe deeply often, outdoors as much as possible. Air out your home and office, and keep the bedroom window open an inch or two when sleeping, even in winter. Taking a 20-30 min walk in the fresh air and sun-shine is an ideal way to combine the benefits of exercise, fresh air and sunlight. Maintain good posture in order to achieve optimal oxygenation of the tissues.

**R**est

To maintain or regain health, at least 7-8 hours of sleep a night are needed by most people. During sleep our body engages in renewing immunity chemicals which keep our bodies ready to fight infection. When sick, we need more sleep than we normally get or need; becoming fatigued and sleepy is typical when dealing with a viral infection. Without adequate sleep, it is nearly impossible to get well. Sleep and rest are essential in building and maintaining immunity.

**T**rust in God

While stress is common to all, effectively managing stress through various stress management strategies including a firm trust in God helps us to avoid anxiety that can be a drain on the immune system. Understand and claim the biblical promise: “Fear thou not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will help you, I will strengthen you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.” Isaiah 41:10.

Cooperating with the NEWSTART principles, God-given “laws” of health, is the best course of action to prevent disease. Claiming promises like, “There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling,” (Ps. 91:10) would be presumption if we are knowingly working against God’s natural health laws, and consequently we would not be able to receive His fullest blessings.

**In conclusion**, when a disease process begins, incorporate lifestyle health principles therapeutically. For example, it is advised to routinely eat as optimal a diet as possible, but to combat disease focus on immune-enhancing foods like garlic and greens in order to further arm the body and ward off disease. Utilizing herbal teas, essential oils, nutritional supplements and hydrotherapy may greatly enhance the body’s immune system to fight disease as well.

**Supplements and herbs to consider for additional support:**

**Echinacea** – This powerful herb not only supports the immune system, it also has been proven to reduce the severity and duration of viral infections, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4058675/>

**Nettle** – The nettle plant contains several immune-boosting compounds, including flavonoids, carotenoids, and vitamins A and C. These antioxidants help protect immune cells against damage that can weaken immune function. Research shows nettle extract strengthens the immune response, encouraging immune cell activity. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/8-surprising-health-benefits-of-nettle-tea/ar-AAFtHHi>

Can be purchased in an extract, but is very enjoyable as tea.

Suggested purchasing site: Loose leaf tea - [https://www.amazon.com/Organic-Nettle-Leaf-Resealable-Bulgaria/dp/B07475442G/ref=sr\_1\_fkmr0\_2?dchild=1&keywords=Feel+Good+organicsnettle+tea&qid=1585079074&sr=8-2-fkmr0&swrs=E733A768DF541CD4D5AF8BE2C63EA7C6](https://www.amazon.com/Organic-Nettle-Leaf-Resealable-Bulgaria/dp/B07475442G/ref%3Dsr_1_fkmr0_2?dchild=1&keywords=Feel+Good+organicsnettle+tea&qid=1585079074&sr=8-2-fkmr0&swrs=E733A768DF541CD4D5AF8BE2C63EA7C6)

**Elderberry**

A double-blind trial showed elderberry extract’s ability to reduce symptoms of influenza and speed recovery. It also showed elderberry’s ability to enhance immune response with higher levels of antibodies in the blood. It is believed to inhibit a virus’s ability to penetrate healthy cells and protect cells with powerful antioxidants. See: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15080016>

**Vitamin C** – Vitamin C is a very efficient and potent immune booster, and is found in citrus fruit, potatoes and cabbage. A supplement may be used; 1 g/day can help fight infections. See: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3659258/>

**Vitamin D3** – If getting little sun exposure, a supplement is advised. Adequate Vit. D is essential for a healthy immune system, as well as for bone health and additionally encourages weight loss and helps combat depression.

See: <https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/benefits-vitamin-d>

**Zinc -** Zinc has been proven to be effective against the common cold and to be helpful as a topical treatment for herpes sores. It is believed to be effective due to preventing replication of the virus in viral infections. Focus on zinc-rich foods such as spinach, pumpkin, flax and sesame seeds. Zinc lozenges may also be used.

See: <https://academic.oup.com/advances/article/10/4/696/5476413>

**Garlic** - Garlic is anti-viral, anti-fungal, and antibacterial. You can take garlic in a tonic or if you can handle it, chew raw garlic. Not only will it help fight a virus, it will help kill any secondary infections trying to take root.

See: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/garlic-fights-colds-and-flu#section2>

Many home chefs mistakenly cook garlic immediately after crushing or chopping it. To maximize the health benefits, crush the garlic at room temperature and allow it to sit for about 15 minutes. This process triggers an enzyme reaction that boosts the healthy compound, allicin, in the garlic.

Here are a few tonic recipes to try:

**“Rocket Fuel”**

1 quart warm water

Juice of 1 lemon

1 clove raw garlic

1 inch peeled ginger

¼ cup onion

1 tablespoon honey

Dash of cayenne pepper

 Crush garlic clove & wait 15 min. Blend smooth, strain & drink 1 qt. daily.

**“Rocket Booster”**

1 grapefruit

6 cloves raw garlic

2½ cups water

Wash grapefruit well and cut into large chunks, including the skin. Combine with water and bring to a boil and let it boil for 2 minutes. Pour into a large strainer over a bowl and press the grapefruit and garlic to express all the juice.

This tonic is delicious, soothing and very effective at the early stage of a cold, and much easier to tolerate when you’re not up for “high test” tonic.

**“Nature’s Penicillin”**

3 large garlic cloves

2 lemons

1 oranges

1 grapefruit

1/2 large onion

1/16-1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper (if heavily congested)

3 drops peppermint oil (optional)

¼ to ½ cup water or orange juice

-Crush garlic cloves and wait 10-15 minutes to allows time for the allicin to further develop. Peel the lemons, orange and grapefruit, allowing some of the white pith to remain. Slice into large pieces and remove seeds. Chop onion into large dice.

-Combine ingredients in blender adding peppermint oil if desired and blend until smooth. Add a small amount of water or juice if needed to blend.

-Drink 1 cup 20 minutes before breakfast.

**Garlic Tea**

Crush 3 large cloves of garlic, wait 15 minutes. Add to 3 cups boiling water and steep 30 minutes. Salt may be added to taste.

Disclaimer:
All content presented here is for informational purposes only. We do not provide medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. These strategies are not intended to be a substitute for medical advice; before taking any action consult with your healthcare provider.

*“Beloved, I wish above all things that you prosper*

 *and be in health even as your souls prospers.” 3 John 2*

*LifeSpring Center* is a ministry of Stuart Seventh-day Adventist Church, Stuart, VA