

IMMUNE BALANCE & OPTIMIZATION

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Kingston Integrated Healthcare

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COLD & FLU PREVENTION

~ Dr. Sonya Nobbe, ND



If you're older than 65 or have a chronic illness such as diabetes or heart disease, you're considered at high-risk of developing life-threatening complications from the flu. You may have more control than you realize over whether this happens to you this winter.

Our general public health approach to cold and flu prevention

is "attack or be attacked". Regular use of antibacterial soaps,

antibiotics, and flu vaccines that target the "bad guys" are common. However, **our lives actually depend on trillions of good bacteria that live inside us and teach our immune system to kill harmful microbes.** War strategies that simply target the "bad guy" not only initiate collateral damage against our "good guys", but may also harm us by neglecting to directly support our immune function.

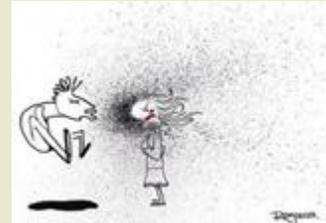
BACTERIA TEACH OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM HOW TO PROTECT US FROM ILLNESS

A healthy digestive tract is critical for immune health. It not only houses most of our good immune-balancing bacteria, but also contains approximately 60% of our immune cell function, and is the gateway for absorbing immune stimulating nutrients like zinc and vitamin D. Your absorption of these nutrients may be compromised if you regularly consume stomach

acid blocking medication such as Zantac, have had gallstones, or have a digestive illness such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

Multiple studies link vitamin D deficiency with increased cold and flu susceptibility. In fact, one study found **adequate vitamin D levels to be more protective against the flu than the flu shot.** Given that only 35% of Canadians may have adequate vitamin D levels, supplementation is an important part of illness prevention. Your vitamin D blood levels can be

HAVE A PLAN



Did you know that nearly any nutrient deficiency can significantly depress your immune system?

We can help you identify where your body needs support to obtain optimal immune health. Immune appointments may include laboratory testing, a physical exam, nutritional assessment, dietary recommendations, and suggestions for immune supportive supplements to keep on hand for prevention and quick recovery. Osteopathy, lymphatic massage, reiki, and acupuncture can also be equally important parts of an immune balancing health plan.

measured by your Medical or Naturopathic Doctor.

A cold and flu prevention plan can significantly reduce your chances of getting ill and allow

you to enjoy time with friends and family this winter season. Engage a health practitioner skilled in medically assessing your nutrient status and digestive health, and who can recommend effective

complementary strategies that support rather than harm your body's optimal immune function.

“By creating an artificial environment, we're not stimulating our immune system enough. Germs are immune-stimulants. They challenge you to be prepared.” ~ Deepak Chopra

TIPS FOR HEALTHY IMMUNITY



FEVER IS GOOD FOR YOU! A higher body temperature is one critical way your body eliminates harmful viruses and bacteria. Ask your practitioner about when to reduce or intensify a fever.

CHILDREN ARE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE during the cold and flu season. The Canadian Pediatric Society advises parents that **over-the-counter cough and cold medicines should NOT be given to children younger than 3 years old.**

REDUCE SUGAR INTAKE. Consuming the amount of sugar equivalent to 2 cans of pop can inhibit your immune system for hours after ingestion, and decrease your ability to kill bacteria by 50%.

KEEP HYDRATED. Dry mucous membranes in your nose and mouth are an easy way for viruses to enter your body. Use a nasal saline rinse or neti pot daily, drink plenty of water, and keep an air humidifier running.

DRESS WARMLY. A recent study validated the notion that exposing oneself to a chill can result in cold symptoms. Up to 12% more colds developed in study participants who were exposed to a chill. The chill may cause constriction of blood vessels in the nose, which decreases the body's resistance to infection.

THE FLU SHOT



90% of deaths caused by influenza (the flu) occur in seniors even though seniors are the most likely group to receive the flu shot.

The effectiveness of the vaccine significantly depends on your body's ability to mount an immune response against the ingredients in the vaccine. People with immune deficiencies are less able to generate the virus-fighting antibodies stimulated by the vaccine, so they acquire less protection against the flu than healthier people. In other words, the most vulnerable population acquires the least protection from the flu vaccine.

Improving your immune system function is beneficial no matter whether you decide to receive the flu vaccine or not. How do you know if your immune system is optimal and ready to fight the flu? Complete the **immune questionnaire** from our October e-Newsletter. Autoimmune disease, allergies, and eczema are some symptoms of imbalanced immune function. People with gastrointestinal discomfort, diabetes, or who take acid blocking medications or corticosteroids, are also at increased risk of immune imbalances. Some standard blood testing and a nutritional physical exam by your ND will also give you some clues as to the current health of your immune system.

