



Sick & Tired of Feeling Sick & Tired?

Causes of Weakened Immunity & Allergies

In my many years of practice I have never witnessed so many cases of severe and often recurrent viral and bacterial infections, allergy and digestive symptoms, pain and inflammation and autoimmune conditions across all age groups.

A strong, healthy immune system is able to keep us well, even when those around us are coughing, sneezing and getting sick. Unfortunately due to our fast paced lifestyles, pollution ridden cities and toxins in our food and water supply, our immune systems are constantly under attack. Other important factors which influence immune function are poor sleep, excessive physical, mental or emotional stress, a lack of regular exercise and relaxation, polluted air, water and chemicals, pesticides, antibiotics and toxins in our food supply. In addition our busy lifestyles lead to a lack of planning and time which leads to poor food choices most notably an excess of processed foods, sugars, refined carbohydrates and trans fats such as pizzas, chips, pies, hamburgers, cakes, biscuits and soft drinks.

The Importance of "Good Bugs" in Your Digestive System

There is an ever-increasing amount of research showing the health of our digestive system or microbiome has a significant impact on the health of our immune system. Research is finding that antibiotics which are now used widely in the production of food supply including beef, pork, chicken and fish significantly disrupt our gut ecosystem. Pesticides, preservatives and chemicals in our food also upset this important balance as do many pharmaceutical drugs including antacids, cholesterol lowering drugs and anti-depressants just to name a few. Common foods such as sugar, wheat, dairy, soy and corn are also common offenders for many people.

What to Do to Strengthen Your Immune Defences

A healthy diet is essential for healthy immunity:

- Eat a well-balanced "real food" diet including an emphasis on fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, non-farmed fish, eggs, legumes and lean grass fed or organic meat and poultry.
- Include immune boosting foods in your diet particularly garlic, onions, ginger, turmeric, green tea, cloves, cinnamon, lemons, limes, berries, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato and mushrooms.
- Reduce your intake of mucous-forming foods such as dairy, wheat products, sugar, deep fried and refined foods.
- Take probiotic and fermented foods to promote beneficial bacteria in your digestive system. These include good quality organic yoghurt, kombucha, kefir, miso, sauerkraut and kimchi.
- Avoid foods low in nutrients such as processed and pre-packaged foods, sugar, lollies and white flour products.
- If you have taken antibiotics ensure you recolonise your digestive system with good bacteria such as good quality probiotics and eat fermented foods as above.
- Drink at least two litres of filtered or spring water every day.

Supplementation a Necessity in Our Toxic Environment

Unfortunately in our increasingly toxic environment and a world where most food is laden with pesticides, fertilisers and chemicals and often devoid of vital nutrients adding immune stimulating herbs and supplements are a vital part of any immune building prescription. My top favourites include:

- Vitamin C, bioflavonoids, zinc, selenium, lysine, betacarotene or vitamin A. These can be taken daily as a preventative for colds, flus, recurrent viruses and allergies.
- Herbal medicines such as olive leaf, echinacea, astragalus, cats claw and elderberry are some of my favorite herbs to balance and strengthen your immune system.
- Foods and spices such as cinnamon, cloves, ginger, garlic, chilli, horseradish and turmeric are great anti-inflammatory and immune stimulating foods to include in your daily diet.
- Medicinal mushrooms such as reishi, shitake, chaga, cordiceps and Lions Mane have powerful immune strengthening benefits and may be taken as powders, tablets or liquids.
- Herbs such as baical skullcap, albizzia, ginkgo, fenugreek, eyebright and golden seal are great for allergies such as hay fever, sinus, asthma and other types of allergies.

Strengthen Your Immune Defences

Unfortunately living in cities with burgeoning development and gridlock traffic exposes us to poor air quality which in turn increases allergies and immune issues. Buildings such as offices, shopping centres and even our homes are also great sources of toxins. It is important to air your home regularly to release toxins. Adding plants, salt lamps or investing in a good quality air filtration system will all improve your home or work environment. Also use natural based fabrics, personal care products and cleaning product where possible.

Adequate sleep is essential for a healthy immune system so it is important to get adequate rest and relaxation. Practices like meditation are particularly useful for relaxation and improving immunity.

Exercise is also important for healthy immunity. A combination of cardiovascular exercise such as walking, swimming, cycling or jogging and strengthening exercise like yoga, pilates, tai chi and weights 3 to 4 times weekly will give the most benefit.

Spending time outdoors in nature particularly at the beach or in bush has a beneficial effect on our immune system as well as an anti-inflammatory effect especially if your feet or body are in direct contact with the sand, water, grass or earth.

Keeping Well This Winter

Prevention is always better than cure, so follow these simple supplement, dietary and lifestyle tips for building healthy immunity. If you do find yourself sniffing, coughing and sneezing or constantly run down, contact me to design a specific immune strengthening plan to help build your immunity and get you back on your feet sooner.

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