



How To Boost Your Immune System And Navigate COVID-19 Fears

I'm having these important conversations with my patients, colleagues, friends, and family every day. With everyone glued to the news of the spread of the novel coronavirus, we want to address the common questions we're receiving. Preventing illness altogether may be out of our control, however preparing our bodies, minds and homes can help us to navigate this pandemic with more confidence. Our goal is to give you some clear and actionable tips to boost your immune system and attempt to reduce the impact this virus has on your family's daily life.

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more so that we may fear less. - Marie Curie"

Please be advised that health information is changing by the minute and it is important for people to keep up with the CDC (Centres for Disease Control & Prevention) and WHO (World Health Organization) for up to date information and advise.

What Are The Symptoms Of COVID-19

COVID-19 is the name given to a contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus of unknown origin which is currently spreading quickly throughout the world. Symptoms can be similar to a mild cold, or may exacerbate to pneumonia. A lot is still to be learned about the defining symptoms of this particular virus.

Common / Known Symptoms:

- Fever, sometimes alternating
- Cough, mild or severe.
- Difficulty breathing / shortness of breath

Rare / Possible Additional Symptoms:

- Nausea / Vomiting

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Who is at risk of catching COVID-19?

Like other coronaviruses, such as those which cause the common cold, this year's novel coronavirus spreads easily. In fact, the virus causing COVID-19 seems to have a slightly longer incubation period than most, which means that individuals may unknowingly carry and spread the virus for about 2-14 days before symptoms appear. Herein lies the reason for the vast reach this virus is having.

Who is at risk of more serious complications?

As with all illnesses, certain individuals are at a higher risk of serious complications related to COVID-19. This includes anyone middle aged and elderly. You are also at a higher risk if you suffer from any health issues that might compromise your immune system such as cancer, or your respiratory system, such as asthma, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.

In fact, any underlying health condition is reason to take extra precautions to avoid catching the virus, and boost your immune system to fight it off more effectively should you catch it.

Many individuals who contract COVID-19 will have minimal symptoms and some may not even realise they have it.

What Is The Mortality Rate of COVID-19?

Calculating the rate of mortality during the current outbreak is difficult, as many illnesses are unreported or not confirmed with tests, and many individuals have cases so mild they may seem to have been from a common cold.

Fluctuating and inconsistent figures show us that there are many factors involved, and panicking over them is not helpful.

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6 Ways To Boost Your Immune System To Help Protect Yourself From Any Coronavirus

As with anything, there are things that you can do to minimize your risk and help protect or reduce the severity of symptoms from catching a cold, the flu, or the current Coronavirus.

1. Hand Hygiene

This one may seem obvious, but wash your hands well and frequently using warm water and soap. [Here is a link to the World Health Organization's recommended hand washing technique.](#) A good strategy is to implement a policy of everyone washing their hands as soon as they enter your home.

It is also a good idea to regularly sanitize high traffic areas around your home such as door knobs, light switches, TV remotes etc.

2. Rest & Sleep Properly

Even though we are all extremely busy, make sure you are getting enough sleep. When you sleep your body goes through natural healing and detox processes that are important for maintaining a strong immune system. It is important not to deprive yourself of that healing time.

Good sleep hygiene includes:

- Reading a good novel at bedtime instead of catching up on the day's news on your phone
- Turning off your phone's notifications in the evening
- Turning down the lights to create a more soothing bedtime environment
- Sleeping in complete darkness or wear an eye mask to boost your body's natural melatonin levels.

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3. Maintain a Healthy Diet

“You are what you eat” is a phrase that almost feels outdated. But guess what? It is true. Make sure that you are eating a healthy diet with plenty of foods such as leafy greens, healthy fats, lean proteins and complex carbohydrates. Try to avoid prepared foods with ingredients that you can't pronounce, and of course, do your best to minimise white sugar. If you need to use sweeteners, use a natural version such as stevia, monk fruit sweetener or the lower-glycemic coconut sugar.

Here are also some foods that are considered to be immune-boosting. If you are unable to find them fresh, frozen is also good.

- Leafy green vegetables such as spinach and broccoli are high in vitamin C and E and flavonoids, all helpful for the immune system to work optimally.
- Orange foods such as oranges, red bell peppers and sweet potatoes are high in beta-carotene, a protective antioxidant.
- Salmon and other oily fish provide healthy fats for strong cells, and may be helpful in reducing immune-related conditions.
- Turmeric both fresh and powdered is helpful in reducing inflammation in the body. Onions, garlic, and ginger may also provide some immune-boosting effects and contain higher amounts of quercetin which is shown some studies to have an anti-viral effect.
- Berries, especially blueberries which contain flavonoids, compounds helpful in fighting off upper respiratory tract infections.
- Probiotic foods such as kefir, kimchi and natural yoghurt contain a variety of good bacteria which are helpful to the immune system.
- Unpasteurised honey such as Manuka honey can help reduce cough symptoms. Take 1 teaspoon in the evening before bed, or sip in the form of a hot, comforting honey and lemon tea.

4. Take Your Supplements

Now is a good time to use some of those supplements that are cluttering up your cupboard before they go out of date!

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Vitamins D & C

A good base for boosting immunity starts with increasing your intake of vitamins D and C.

Probiotics

If you're not already taking a probiotic, look for a high quality version containing multiple strains. L. rhamnosus is a strain of probiotic which is often studied for its protective effect in respiratory infections.

Of course nothing can provide 100% protection, but a good base of immune support can give you a fighting chance.

Glutathione

Nebulized glutathione via inhalation can be administered by your Naturopathic Doctor (with additional training and certification in the use of injectable solutions and with prescription rights) to help manage symptoms in patients with respiratory infection and disease. Call Dr. Sachdev ND for more information about it's potential to help.

IntraVenous Infusion Therapy

Intravenous infusion nutrient therapy can be helpful in supporting immune function and promote overall wellness and/or treat infection and disease. Since IV therapy involves injecting high doses of vitamins and minerals directly into the veins, there are no limits in absorption related to oral ingestion or digestion since what is delivered is immediately and directly utilized by the cells.

Be sure to call and book specifically for IV therapy to meet your health needs.

5. Stay Hydrated

One of the things people find the hardest to do when busy is remembering to drink enough water. The rule of thumb is that if you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated.

What you should aim for is at least 8 - 10 glasses of water per day. This is so beneficial to every aspect of your well-being. Water helps those vitamins & micronutrients to move around between cells, helps your cells clean themselves out

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at night, and your lymphatic and urinary systems to flush the bad stuff out so that you feel refreshed and healthy. Being properly hydrated helps your immune system, skin, nails, hair, muscles.. the list goes on!

If you are someone who just doesn't like water; try adding in a squirt of lemon. Not only does it add a more palatable taste but it contains vitamin c and has liver cleansing properties as well.

Also, keep your air humidified. Research shows that it reduces the body's susceptibility to respiratory infection.

6. Reduce Stress

Stress reduction is top of the list of healthy lifestyle habits, and is particularly important at times like these. Find small ways to calm things (and yourself / kids) down throughout the day, and definitely try to avoid blasting CNN 24/7.

When we are feeling stressed out our body feels it too. This is not just a psychological issue, it's physiological as the stress hormone cortisol changes the body's reactions to food, sleep and immunity.

Use hydrotherapy (bath, swimming, showers) break up the day with some outdoor time, try an infrared sauna, take up meditation, read a good book, move your body, exercise is key to reducing stress or sing a little karaoke... the list is endless - whatever feels calming, make a little time for it daily.

7. Spinal Adjustment

Many studies have shown the nervous system plays a role in the modulation of immune response. Neural dysfunction stresses a body out, which may lead to a weakened immune system and lowered response to a foreign body, such as viruses. Dr. Amita Sachdev ND performs Bowen Therapy, offering gentle musculoskeletal maneuvering for improved body structure and overall function.

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What To Do If You Think You May Have Contracted COVID-19?

Despite your best efforts, the novel coronavirus might still infiltrate your home or community. For most of us, this will mean a mild to moderate bout of illness, whereas for others it may be more severe and require hospitalization. If you feel your symptoms may be consistent with COVID-19 there is no need to panic, it is always best to deal with the facts of the situation calmly.

First Contact Your Family Doctor Or Local Public Health Service

First and foremost, telephone your family doctor or your local public health department or telehealth service to find out what your next steps are. This may include specific instructions to go to a local testing centre, rather than going to a clinic or emergency department.

If You Are Advised To Stay Home

Should you be advised to stay home, here are some things you can do in hopes of making your illness as short and painless as possible:

1 - Stay Well Hydrated

You likely will not be overly hungry during this time so sticking to soups and/or bone broth is a good plan. Drink plenty of water, and add some coconut, apple, blueberry or pomegranate juice to help with your electrolytes.

Herbal teas such as Ginger, Peppermint, Rooibos and Chamomile can be soothing as well as hydrating to help you feel better.

2 - Humidify To Relieve Congestion

Using a neti-pot or humidifier can help to relieve chest congestion. If you don't own either, try closing the bathroom door and running the shower as hot as possible to create a makeshift steam room. A few drops of Eucalyptus oil in the bathtub can help bring some relief to the lungs as well.

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3 - Take Elderberry Syrup

Studies have found that Elderberry syrups and extracts, readily available in health food stores and integrative pharmacies, help to reduce the duration of colds and respiratory infections. Keep a bottle in the fridge for a targeted remedy to take at the first sign of symptoms.

4 - Take a Vitamin C and Zinc Supplement

Taking Zinc orally can also help reduce the duration of a cold, flu or respiratory illness, especially if taken preventatively or within 24 hours of symptoms starting.

5 - When It's Over, Sanitize Everything... Again

Once your symptoms ease up and you are feeling more like yourself, it is generally a good practice to sanitize everything that you can. Make sure you change your towels, bedsheets, and your toothbrush.

When To Seek Urgent Medical Help For Your Symptoms

Secondary infections such as pneumonia are a real risk with COVID-19, so it is important to keep tabs on your symptoms.

If your fever climbs to 39.5° C or higher, you have trouble breathing with only slight exertion, feel chest pain or pressure, sudden dizziness, confusion, or severe vomiting - these are all symptoms which warrant a call to 911 or your local public health department's telehealth number.

We hope this information helps you to feel calm and confident in your ability to handle whatever may or may not come your way. Remember enhancing your immune system is always your best defense against all illnesses. If you would like to discuss a long term plan to keep your health and immune system in the best shape possible, please give our clinic a call, we're here for you!

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Resources:

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2001468>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4863266/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5664031/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23830380>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3928210/>

<https://ard.bmj.com/content/73/11/1949>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19896252>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20359267>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4848651/>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/08/100810122045.htm>

Hand washing video to share <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PmVJQUCm4E>

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