



Non-Drug Cold and Flu Prevention and Recovery

Have you or someone you know been getting sick a lot lately? This could be a sign that the adrenal/thyroid system isn't functioning optimally and may be in need of an in-depth workup. Many of us may not realize that it is the adrenals that keep us strong and protect us from all foreign invaders. Regardless of whether or not this is the case, there are several things that can be done to give your immune system a boost to help you skate through the cold and flu season.

Top Tips for Prevention:

- **Eat plenty of organic vegetables.** Organic vegetables are generally more nutrient dense than conventional produce, aren't genetically modified, and don't come laced with a complementary array of toxic chemicals.
- **Reduce/eliminate processed and refined foods, refined sugars (and this means artificial sweeteners too!), smoking and excessive alcohol.** All of these items cause inflammation and damage to your cells. If you're sick, then you already have plenty of inflammation to deal with without giving yourself a double helping.
- **Consume plenty of live fermented foods.** Over 70% of your immune system resides in your gut and live fermented foods have been proven to boost immunity.
- **Wash hands frequently WITHOUT antibacterial soaps/sanitizers.** Harsh antimicrobials like triclosan kill good and bad bacteria alike and can be toxic to our skin and body. Instead, use a natural soap without antimicrobial agents or other harsh chemicals. This will still help prevent the spread of germs while reducing the development of "super bugs" that are occurring due to the overuse of antimicrobial agents.
- **Stay well hydrated.** A good rule of thumb is to divide your body weight (in pounds) by two and then drink that many ounces of water a day. For example, a 150 pound person would drink 75 ounces of water a day.
- **Make sure you are getting plenty of sleep every night.** Shoot for 7-8 hours per night (more if you feel like you need it). Research indicates that regular sleep-wake times and sufficient amounts of sleep do wonders for keeping us healthy. One of the main reasons is that our circadian rhythm is regulated by cortisol and melatonin. Without enough sleep or regular wake-sleep cycles, our adrenals have to work much harder which can also lead to thyroid problems and immune dysfunction.
- If you start feeling run down, **take the day off from work if you can.**
- Before you get in line to receive your mercury-laden flu shot, consider reading more of the studies so you can make an educated decision. Much of the research from the CDC and the Cochrane Collaboration, among other sources, suggests that **flu vaccines aren't having the beneficial effects we have been led to believe. One peer-reviewed study published in March, 2016 in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*,**

even shows that those who get the flu shot every year get the flu more frequently! [Please read more by clicking here for a well-referenced vaccine article by John F. Kennedy, Jr.](#)

- **Vitamin C:** Consume 3-10 grams of vitamin C per day in 1-2 gram doses (3+ doses per day). Vitamin C is readily flushed from the body so the more times it is taken throughout the day, the better. If diarrhea occurs 30-120 minutes after taking your last dose of vitamin C, you are at your vitamin C saturation point, also known as 'bowel tolerance'. If this occurs, reduce the amount taken so that you can remain comfortably below bowel tolerance throughout the day. If you do end up coming down with the flu, the amount of vitamin C that will be required to cause bowel tolerance will likely increase significantly (See below).
- **Vitamin D:** Take 10,000 iu Vitamin D every day from September to May or the dose necessary to keep blood levels between 60 and 80 ng/mL. I always recommend having your vitamin D levels measured if you choose to take more than 5000 IU of vitamin D on a regular basis.
- **Take a high quality multivitamin every day.** Without a sufficient supply of essential nutrients, our immune systems will not be able to function properly.
- **Stay physically active.** Exercise keeps the immune system strong and reduces stress.
- **Sauna Therapy:** All types of saunas are beneficial for enhancing the immune system and making the body more resistant to viruses. Also, if you come down with the cold or flu, sauna therapy can help you get over it faster and reduce some of the unpleasant symptoms such as body aches and tight muscles. Remember, fever (extra heat) is your body's natural way of clearing many infections.
- **Adaptogenic Herbs:** Adaptogens strengthen the immune system (via the adrenals). A good time to consider using adaptogenic herbs is when you know you will be dealing with a period of greater stress than normal. Good adaptogens include Siberian ginseng, ashwagandha, holy basil, and rhodiola. Many of these come in tinctures, capsules and sometimes teas.
- **Take additional steps to manage stress effectively.** Ideas include a few minutes of daily alone time, meditation, deep belly breathing, earthing and/or getting outside every day, walking without your hands in your pockets, staying in touch with friends/family, days off, and regular vacations.

Top Tips for Recovery:

- **Rest and get plenty of sleep!** Your body is telling you to stop and take care of yourself. This includes taking time off from work. Besides, who wants to be around someone who is sick?
- **Drink lots of fluids** (see above). This is even more important if diarrhea or vomiting is an issue, especially in children.
- **Don't suppress a fever with NSAIDS (aspirin, tylenol, ibuprofen) unless absolutely necessary.** Heat/fever is what clears viruses. Our body knows what it is doing, we just have to be smart enough to get out of the way.
- **Don't treat colds and flus with antibiotics!** This is one of the biggest mistakes made in medicine. The cold and flu are caused by viruses of which antibiotics have no effect against. In fact, a round of antibiotics can leave you more susceptible to

viruses in general. The overuse of antibiotics is a major driver in the development of many chronic illnesses.

- **Vitamin D:** 20,000 IU per day until fully recovered (not more than two weeks). Vitamin D deficiency is one of the main causes of acute illness during the colder months. No sun = no vitamin D production = increased risk for infections.
- **Vitamin A:** 50,000 IU for 3 days then 20,000 IU per day until you feel better (don't use for more than 10 days). Don't use more than 10,000 IU/day if you are pregnant or could possibly conceive.
- **Vitamin C:** Viruses cause our bodies (especially our adrenals) to use up much more vitamin C than when we are healthy. For this reason, many people will not reach bowel tolerance without taking much higher amounts of vitamin C. And, generally speaking, the worse the viral infection, the greater the demand for higher amounts of vitamin C. For this reason, a more aggressive dosing schedule than listed above may be needed to achieve bowel tolerance. Once bowel tolerance is reached, reduce the dosage to that amount that keeps you comfortably under bowel tolerance while still dosing every 2 hours. Because vitamin C washes out of the system quickly (it's a water soluble vitamin), regular dosing is important for maximum efficacy.
- **N-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC):** 1000-1500 mg three times a day until well. NAC is an antioxidant and works very well with Vitamin C (they can recharge each other). One study showed approximately 200% lower risk of coming down with flu symptoms in participants taking 600 mg twice daily over a 6 month period versus those who didn't take NAC.
- **Zinc** (one of the following or a combination totaling less than 100 mg/day): Lozenges: Use up to 50 mg per day of zinc in this form. Try to use lozenges that contain minimal sugar and no artificial sweeteners/flavors. Capsules/tablets: 20-30 mg three times a day with food until recovered.
- **Echinacea** (one of the following): Tincture: 3-5 ml every 2-3 hours for 1-2 days or until you start feeling better, then 3 ml every 4 hours until resolved. Capsules: 1000 mg 3-4 times per day until feeling better then 500 mg 3-4 times per day until recovered.
- **Black Elderberry** (one of the following): Tincture: 20-40 drops 2-4 times per day. Capsules: 2 capsules 2-3 times per day. Try to avoid the syrups as they generally contain too much sugar.
- **Garlic:** 1 medium clove 1-3 times per day. Shoot for one initial loading dose of 3 cloves if possible.
- **Probiotics:** 50-100 billion CFUs per day until fully recovered. High doses of probiotics have been shown to speed up recovery from the cold and flu.
- **Eat small meals (primarily broths/soups) or consider fasting if capable.** Generally, if you're not hungry, don't eat. This is your body's normal response to acute illness.
- **Salt Water Gargle:** 1/2 tsp salt in 4 ounces of warm water. Gargle as needed for sore throat.
- **Herbal Teas:** Teas are a great way to increase fluid intake throughout the day and to soothe the throat. For coughs, try mullein, marshmallow or slippery elm. For

nausea, ginger and chamomile are often beneficial. There are also “throat coat” tea blends and immune tea blends that can be effective.

- **Other herbs to consider:** Licorice root (if you don’t have high blood pressure), andrographis, boneset, olive leaf, all medicinal mushrooms, astragalus, propolis, and all adaptogenic herbs listed above. Many of these can be found in teas, tinctures or capsules.
- **Steam Inhalation** (loosens mucus/phlegm): Pour boiling water in a bowl. Drape towel over head while leaning over a bowl (not too close). Breath deeply for 5-10 minutes at a time. Repeat as needed. Add a few drops of essential oils to the water if you like. Good ideas are eucalyptus, oregano, tea tree, lavender, rosemary, thieves, etc. All essential oils are antimicrobial so find one that works well for you.
- **Humidifiers:** Use if your sinuses are drying out. Dry sinuses predispose to viral infections of the nasal mucosa and can also prevent a speedy recovery. Essential oil vaporizers can also be very beneficial as they disperse water vapor with a small amount of purifying essential oils. Reconsider the use of humidifiers if your home is prone to mold/mildew.
- **Get medical help if:** You have trouble breathing/asthma/COPD, moderate to severe symptoms that don’t go away after 10-14 days, severe neck pain and stiffness with intense headaches (rule out meningitis), dehydration (especially in very young children or elderly), symptoms progressing to pneumonia or bronchitis, sinusitis that doesn’t resolve within a week, otitis media that doesn’t resolve within several days, congestive heart disease exacerbation, or any other condition or symptoms that are severe.

***Note:** All dosages listed above should be appropriately decreased for children based on their weight. Make sure you work with your pediatric provider.

Now you can consider yourself empowered when it comes to the cold and flu season! As mentioned above, if you find yourself frequently run down or catching every illness that comes along, consider scheduling an appointment with a competent thyroid and adrenal specialist like myself. To schedule a free 15 minute phone consultation that could help you determine if you need a thyroid or adrenal reset, please call us at **(541) 727-1893** or look us up online at www.RogueNaturalMedicine.com. We would love to help!

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