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Wellness Guide to the Coronavirus

Welcome to your Wellness Guide to the Coronavirus! This document is meant to be used in conjunction with recommendations made by the CDC, your health care provider and other public health officials.

There are many steps you can take to protect yourself from the coronavirus and other seasonal viruses. Use this information to keep you and your family healthy and thriving!

What is the novel coronavirus?

The coronavirus or COVID-19 was first reported in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019 as an outbreak. A coronavirus, according to the World Health Organization is "known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) or Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)."

Why should you pay attention to it?

Although coronavirus started out as an outbreak, it has since become an epidemic, and there are concerns that it will become a pandemic. An epidemic is an outbreak that spreads rapidly to several people, while, a pandemic is an epidemic of global proportions that can spread amongst several countries.

It is important to note that most cases of the coronavirus (about 80%) are quite mild and not life-threatening, but this also makes the virus very difficult to contain. The majority of people appear to have mild cold-like symptoms and fever, and likely many have no symptoms at all. It does make people sick but not in predictable or specifically identifiable ways. The virus may be beyond containment at this point, but it does not mean that the people who get COVID-19 will have severe illnesses.

What can I do to protect myself and my family?

There is no antiviral medication for COVID-19, and treatment mainly consists of rest and fluids. However, focusing on immune system function will vastly increase your protection from contracting the virus. Keeping your immune system strong will increase your antiviral defense, which is especially important during these stressful times.





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Recommendations to Boost Immune System Function

LIFESTYLE

Sleep

Regularly getting 6-8 hours of sleep is critical to immune system function! Sleep is when the body is able to heal at a cellular level. So whether as a preventative measure, strengthening your immune system, or when you are starting to feel run down, this will always help the body. Think about it – this is why most people get so tired when they are sick, the body is trying to heal. Additionally, increasing your sleep helps increase the number of white blood cells which are a big part of your immune response. In contrast, lack of sleep (even for a few hours) can increase inflammation resulting in pain and make us more susceptible to catching colds/flu.

Watch What You Eat...

Too much sweet and spicy food can generate phlegm that can aggravate the sinuses and throat; chicken and rice soup with vegetables, garlic and green/spring onion are great to add into your diet and will help reduce the effects of colds and flu.

In general it's best to avoid simple sugars and processed foods as much as possible, but when considering immune system function this becomes even more important! Keeping blood sugars at healthy levels has also been shown to improve immune system activity. You can build up your body's immune system by eating lots of colorful vegetables and some fruits. They have so many good tools for the body - such as antioxidants that help destroy free radicals that will weaken our immune system.

...and Drink

We are definitely a coffee and soda culture which makes cutting back or quitting a seemingly impossible thing to do. That said, 1-2 cups (6 oz) of black coffee are ok and in place of soda. Try flavored seltzer water as another sugar free option. In both cases, much less sugar will help the immune system battle all the body weakeners (work stress, anxiety, viruses) coming at you daily.

Try mint tea with a bit of honey for a dry sore throat. Gan Cao/licorice root as a tea for a sore throat with cough (*too much Gan Cao tea will generate phlegm). Lo-Han tea is a great way to immediately soothe a very painful/raw sore throat.

Remember, tea is great but hydration should also include water because dehydration can increase your aches and pains.

Qi Gong / Meditation / Exercise

The onset of illness can put most of us not at our best. These days, with the powerful force of media, the idea of the various forms of the flu make many people worry. All this worry and anxiety can really weaken the immune response – not to mention give you headaches and insomnia. So to reduce stress and improve energy you might add one or more of the following: meditation, Qi gong and exercise such as resistance training. Experiment and find the exercise that you actually look forward to!



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SUPPLEMENTS

Vitamin C

A powerful antioxidant but marketing has made it out to be something good to take in high doses, and that's been found to be inaccurate. *Vitamin C is best taken in doses around 2000-2500 mg/day.* The rest should be in the form of fresh fruits and vegetables. Some of the best sources of Vitamin C are guava, strawberries, cantaloupe, red bell pepper, kale and broccoli.

In some people, high doses — more than 2500 mg per day can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, heartburn, gastritis, fatigue, flushing, headache, and insomnia. Also, people with chronic liver or kidney conditions, gout, or a history of calcium-oxalate kidney stones should take no more than 1,000 mg a day. Thus, it's best to get this from diet as mentioned above.

Astaxanthin (ASX)

Astaxanthin has also been shown to be a powerful antioxidant as it inhibits oxidant molecule formation and regulates the expression of oxidative stress-responsive enzymes. What does that mean? It helps cells fight against oxidative damage. Taken daily at the suggested dosage for 6-8 weeks, ASX has been found to enhance both cell-mediated and humoral immune responses. This is a great way to get your immune system boosted before this virus really spreads.

Elderberry

Results of some studies show that elderberries have significant benefits against cold and virus symptoms. Researchers also have found that people who have taken elderberries have higher levels of antibodies against the influenza virus, showing that not only may the berry be able to treat viral symptoms, it may also be able to prevent infection.

In two placebo-controlled, double-blind studies reported similar results: 93.3% of the people taking an elderberry preparation reported significant improvement in influenza symptoms within 2 days of starting it, compared with the 6 days it took for the placebo group to see improvement. On average, the patients who received the elderberry syrup saw relief of symptoms 4 days earlier than the group that received the placebo syrup.

How does it work as an antiviral? There are probably many mechanisms of action, but a prime one is that elderberries contain hemagglutinin protein. This protein has been shown to stop a virus's capability to replicate by inhibiting its ability to penetrate the cell wall. This can prevent the virus from causing infection if taken before exposed. If elderberries are taken after infection, that keeps the virus from spreading, which reduces the duration of influenza symptoms.

How to take it - Most people take elderberry syrup. If using the syrup take ½ to 1 tablespoon daily for adults to prevent illness; or if you are ill, take ½ to 1 tablespoon every 2 to 3 hours, instead of once a day, until symptoms disappear. Eating the raw seed can lead to nausea and vomiting for those who eat too many of them, however. And beware of commercial powders, as some have been reported to cause vomiting because they may contain the seeds.



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THERAPIES

Acupuncture

Acupuncture has been shown (documented) over 2 millennia to be a safe and effective form of medicine, even in the face of flu epidemics! Now a virus isn't something that is living, so an antibiotic won't work but your body still has ways to fight it. Acupuncture can reduce the symptoms of the flu and at the same time help strengthen the both the body's healing and immune response. Impressive right?! It's also a great way to reduce anxiety, which will help you keep your immune system from weakening.

Chinese Herbs

Ma Huang Tang, Gui Zhi Tang, Yu Ping Feng San, Sang Ju Yin, Yin Xiao San, Ge Gen Tang, and Chai Ge Jie Ji Tang are all formulas that are useful for colds and flu. The big question is which one is best for you to feel better quickly? The solution is to make an appointment with Licensed Acupuncturist/Oriental Medicine Doctor/Acupuncture Practitioner who has both the academic and clinical experience in determining that. Why is that important? Just like other conventional medications, choosing the wrong one can make you feel worse or interfere with a medication you may already be taking.

CLOSING REMARKS

At the end of the day, remember that the Coronavirus is just a virus. In your lifetime, you have been exposed to thousands of viruses, and you've survived. With that said, there are novel aspects to this virus that make it different from those that we've seen before and should be taken seriously.

Prepare yourself by preparing your immune system. Improving immune system function can help you avoid getting sick, lessen the symptoms that you experience and shorten the length of time that you are sick.

If you have questions, or are ready to formulate a custom game plan to strengthen your immune system function, contact us today.



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