

Protecting Yourself Against The Flu

No doubt you will have seen much talk in the media recently about “the Flu”. Having a strong, healthy immune system is your best insurance against influenza this winter, helping reduce susceptibility to colds and flus. The stronger your immune system is, the better it will be able to fight viruses and bacteria it comes into contact with.

Your Immune System: The Army Within

Inside your body there is an amazing system of immune cells and tissues whose sole purpose is to defend you against invasion by bacteria, viruses, allergens and parasites. Collectively, this is called your immune system. A healthy immune system is like having your own private army. When the soldiers in your army are working well, you hardly even notice that they are there. You feel healthy, you have low levels of inflammation, and you are resistant to infections. However, when the army becomes disorganised, confused or overworked, then you may start to notice signs that all is not right.

Potential Invaders

Your army is in constant contact with many kinds of potential invaders (e.g. bacteria, viruses, parasites, allergens). Each line of defence within your immune system has its own weapons and methods of attack to fight off these potential invaders.

Armour for Your Army

There are some key herbs and nutrients which may help your army to fight off any potential invaders and prevent infections this winter.

- **Herbal immune booster:** The following herbs have been shown to fight the pathogens which cause the common cold and the flu and are now available from us in one convenient tablet.
 - *Andrographis paniculata* is an Ayurvedic herb which has a long history of use for bacterial and viral infections. Clinical studies have shown it may reduce the severity and duration of colds and flu. Its anti-inflammatory properties contribute to its symptom-relieving properties.
 - *Picrorrhiza kurroa* has been used traditionally in Indian and Chinese medicine to help maintain a normal healthy immune system. It has been shown to exert anti-inflammatory and immune-stimulating actions.
 - *Sambucus nigra* has traditionally been used for its anti-catarrhal and fever reducing actions to help relieve the symptoms of colds. It is indicated in cases of the common cold/flu, sinusitis and coughs.
- **Nutrients for immune support:** Zinc is the most important mineral for your immune function. A zinc deficiency may cause a weaker immune response, predisposing you to a more lengthy or severe cold. In fact, optimal zinc status has been found to inhibit

the common cold virus. Vitamin C is also important as it increases the activity of infection fighting white blood cells. Vitamin C may prevent the common cold as well as shorten the duration of the symptoms. These two important nutrients for the immune system are available from us in a pleasant tasting powdered supplement.

- **Good bacteria for a good immune system:** *Lactobacillus acidophilus* NCFM is a strain of beneficial bacteria that naturally occurs in the human gastrointestinal tract and is important for healthy digestive and immune function. *Bifidobacterium lactis* HN019 is another good bacterium that has been shown to maintain normal immune response in healthy individuals; and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* HN001 enhances cellular immune resistance through stimulation of your immune soldiers, particularly of natural killer cells. These immune-boosting good bacteria are available in one easy to take capsule – just ask us about it today.

What About the Kids?

Children often get colds and flus over winter. To help them avoid colds and flus we have a pleasant-tasting powder specially formulated for children to improve their immune response. This natural formula contains zinc and vitamin C with phytosterols, which are a mixture of plant sterols that have immune balancing effects and stimulate the immune cells to fight the virus causing the common cold and flu. It also contains andrographis and cat's claw, herbs that have anti-bacterial and anti-viral activity. Andrographis and cat's claw can help stimulate immune cell activity and reduce the severity and duration of symptoms from viral infection.

Diet and lifestyle – foundations for good health

As well as the nutritional and herbal supplements discussed, there are some simple dietary and lifestyle tips you can follow to keep your army strong this winter.

- Over-processing of food has become common in the last decade with the result that many packaged and fast foods have little or no nutritional benefit and yet are high in sugar, fat and salt. In order to boost your immune system, it is important to reduce fatty, processed foods and eat lots of fruit and vegetables, wholegrains and foods containing essential fats (such as oily fish, nuts and seeds).
- De-stress! Enjoy plenty of rest and relaxation. Stress can actually reduce your resistance to infection.
- Exercise regularly. Regular exercise reduces inflammation and can support healthy immunity.
- Increase water intake to six to eight glasses per day. Water is essential for all aspects of good health.

Look after yourself and respect others

If you have symptoms of flu, it is recommend you stay at home, rest and recover. This means you are giving yourself the best chance to get well as soon as possible. It is also showing consideration to your work colleagues and not sharing your virus with others.

Have faith in your immune system

Your own body has an amazing capacity to heal itself. Be confident in your body's ability to heal itself and fight any bacteria and viruses your body meets this winter!

