

# WELLNESS review

## 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.

### There is a Winter War on the Way

With winter on the way there are more potential invaders around and your immune system will be working overtime to protect you from the viruses that cause the common cold and the flu. To give your army the best possible chance at protecting you this winter, there are some simple things you can do.

### Simple Ways to Keep Your Army Strong

- Eat a balanced diet high in fibre and complex carbohydrates, low in fat, with moderate amounts of protein. Eat fresh, wholesome, unprocessed foods. Eating lots of junk foods can slow your army down – especially sweet, sugary foods.
- 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.
- Supplement your diet with recommended nutrients and herbs to boost your immune function.

### Armour for Your Army

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

- **Herbal immune booster:** The following herbs have been shown to kill the pathogens which cause the common cold and the flu and are now available from us in one convenient tablet.

- o *Andrographis paniculata* is an Ayurvedic herb which has a long history of use for bacterial and viral infections. Clinical studies have shown it can reduce the severity and duration of colds and flu. Its anti-inflammatory properties contribute to its symptom-relieving properties.
- o *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.
- o *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.

This winter help your immune system by taking natural supplements and living a healthy lifestyle. Remember prevention is always better than cure, so come in today and talk to us about ways to help get you through the winter months fit and healthy.

