

Looking After Your Immunity Naturally

Hello, I'm Caroline Gaskin, homeopath and holistic health coach. I'm talking here about safe, natural ways to help support your immune system

Since January 23rd when we first heard about a city of millions in China being closed due to a new virus, I've been researching the symptoms and studying my books to help friends, family and clients be prepared for what might come.

I've been listening to other medical professionals, conversing with colleagues and sharing knowledge and insights across various social media platforms.

I'm also observing the seesaw of panic and denial and the various emotions we are all going through.

This disease is all about the lungs so my first thought is to cast your mind back to your yoga teacher saying 'remember to breathe'. Try to spend a little time every day with your breath, your friend for life. If you're feeling stressed sit quietly and do some Kapalbhata. Any time any place. Skull shiner it's also called - the ultimate de-stress breath.

You can test your breath each morning. Breathe in fully and hold your breath. Count calmly to whatever your comfortable capacity is, then let the breath out. Repeat daily and, if you cannot hold your breath for as long as normal, think about consulting a practitioner. Triyoga have therapists working online and check what your local natural therapy clinic is providing. Many yoga teachers have adapted their practices to support clients online.

This disease has an unusually long incubation period. Most colds and flus have a much shorter incubation. This is why we are being advised to stay home for so long. It is virulent, meaning many people will develop antibodies to it, though it is the integrity of our immune system that determines whether we manifest actual symptoms or not. And, as the disease moves across the world it mutates, we see differing symptoms, so this shared knowledge is important and helps get to solutions faster.

Let's take a closer look at resources we can all easily access to support our immunity.

Essential fatty acids and a plant-sourced vitamin C are a good place to start. Supplements containing red algae help fight viral conditions and many mushrooms are helpful. Take advice if you are going to use anything more potent like oregano oil.

Nettles are really nourishing – nettle tea or a soup made from fresh nettles – there are tips online if you like the idea of foraging as part of your daily exercise. Green tea is a potent antioxidant. Brew it at 80C to get the most benefit. And have a plate of organic salad leaves each day or a green shake made with green superfoods like wheatgrass, barleygrass, alfalfa and oatgrass

What we have now is a virus rather than a bacteria. Bacteria thrive in warm climates, viruses like cold climates. Viruses are ultimately destroyed by heat so our body heats up in a fever to destroy the pathogen.

Simply put hot drinks are more helpful, especially in the early stages. Add the juice of half a lemon for extra vitamin and a teaspoon of English heather honey for its antiviral properties. Slice in some fresh ginger and turmeric as they are anti-inflammatory. Add crushed garlic which has many benefits. Add 20 drops of Echinacea tincture which is shown to increase white blood cells.

Please note: avoid garlic if you are on blood thinning medication.

As a homeopath I'd be recommending the remedy Ferrum Phos for the onset of any cold or flu symptoms in 6x or 30c to take hourly for 6 hours. This is one of my favourite remedies for the early stages and is especially helpful for lung conditions.

Many people are currently experiencing a low fever and feeling extremely tired with muscles aches in the upper back. If you have a homeopathic first aid kit you'll see that remedies like Aconite, Arsen Alb and Gelsemium match these symptoms.

Keeping hydrated is absolutely fundamental. Take a warm Himalayan or Epsom Salt bath to relax muscles, sooth nerves and restore mineral levels. This is great advice generally as well as during any cold and flu symptoms. Take a probiotic and eat fermented foods as 80% of our immune response is in the gut.

Make or buy elderberry syrup which is proven to support the lungs and take an antioxidant if you have underlying lung issues.

Antioxidants helps us defeat free radicals. There are many different antioxidants and pycnogenol is specific to support the lungs. Fresh organic fruit and veg are full of antioxidants so a fresh pressed juice each day is a great choice. Apples, carrots, lemon, oranges, ginger, turmeric, parsley, kale will all help support your immune system.

Nibble on some Atlantic dulse seaweed to increase iodine, which is fundamental in our immune response.

Finally pop some essential oils in a diffuser. Pine, clove, grapefruit, cinnamon, tea tree, lemongrass are wonderful.

As ever you must seek medical attention if you are concerned about symptoms.

Homeopaths and naturopaths are trained to look at the actual symptoms and how disease is for you. We explore the individual's susceptibility to disease, family history and life choices.

Take care of yourself and look after family and friends.