

## Keeping The Immune System Healthy Naturally

**Prevention-** Things that you can do on a daily basis to help keep you healthy all year round:

1. Get adequate sleep. Sleep is restorative. Studies show sleep deprivation can adversely affect the immune system.
2. Eat a nutritious diet high in fruits and vegetables and take a quality **Multivitamin** and **Fish Oil**. These supply necessary vitamins and minerals in support of the immune system.
3. Reduce refined sugars and eliminate high fructose corn syrup. Sugar decreases the activity of white blood cells, your primary immune defense system.
4. Wash your hands or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer to remove virus particles from day to day contact.
5. Pay attention to your emotional and spiritual health and get adequate stress relief and exercise. Studies have shown that practices like meditation boost the immune system.
6. Decrease caffeine, drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes, all of which weaken your healthy defenses.
7. Consider immune supporting herbs (such as **Astragalus** or **Medicinal Mushrooms**). Your provider at the Student Health Center can help you decide if this would be beneficial.

**At the first sign of illness or if you feel you are getting run down-** Increase your rest and continue to focus on the above. The following may stave off a cold or decrease the severity or duration of symptoms:

1. Start **Elderberry tincture** (1-2 droppers full in a little water 3-4 x daily) or **Zinc/ Elderberry lozenges**. You may even consider a more complex herbal blend like **Counter Attack** (see below).
2. Increase your hydration- medicinal teas such as **Traditional Medicinals Echinacea Plus** or **Organic Green** are a nice way to stay hydrated. Medicinal teas can have antiviral and antibacterial activity. Green tea is high in antioxidants which help boost your immune system.
3. Increase Vitamin C through citrus fruits in your diet. Juices often have too much sugar.

**When you are sick-** again continue all of the above measures. In addition to the usual cough and cold medications, we have several natural products in the pharmacy such as:

1. **Counter Attack-** a high potency blend of herbs featuring Andrographis which helps to decrease the overall severity of colds and Berberine which helps to prevent secondary bacterial infection.
2. **Pelargonium-** (V Clear or Umcka)-an herb that helps to decrease the duration and severity of bronchitis and other upper respiratory infections.
3. **Neti pot-** a traditional method to mechanically clear discharge and viruses from the nose and sinuses. Humidified air in the shower also helps.
4. **Sambucus syrup** (Black Elderberry)- take this to decrease your severity and duration of illness if you have been diagnosed with Influenza (the 'flu').
5. **Slippery Elm** or **Honey Loquat drops-** soothing for sore throats
6. **Traditional Medicinals Tea-** medicinal quality healing herbal blends. Add a few **Peppermint Essential Oil** drops and let the steam from the tea and peppermint oil clear your sinuses!

**If you have severe symptoms such as shortness of breath, fever, or are not improving you should consult your provider.**