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PREPARE
YOUR BODY
FOR THE
COLDER
SEASONS

By Dr. Michelle Robin

Summer is coming to a close; fall and winter are around the corner. We all tend to be more susceptible to catching colds, the flu or just feeling run down throughout the colder months. I want you to feel your best year-round! There are a few actions you can take to prepare your body and help hold off illness.

First, prepare your body by boosting your immune system. We put a lot of pressure on our immune system simply by the nature of our society – go, go, going, stress at home and work, very little and/or restless sleep, along with low levels of key vitamins and minerals. Your defenses are down. So when you add in the mix of the cold, dankness of fall and winter, and fall allergies like molds and mildews, with the propensity of cold and flu viruses, the odds are not in your favor. Let's change your odds by doing the following:

o **Add Vitamin D** – I've written about vitamin D several times before. It is a crucial nutrient to the regulation of all cell function and, as such, its deficiency can have negative impacts on many systems in the body, including immune, hormone function and even depression. An easy source for vitamin D is sunshine. As the days get shorter and you are less likely to be outside for any length of time, particularly as it gets colder, it is even more important that you take D supplements or increase consumption of D-rich foods such as salmon, tuna and eggs, to name a few.

o **Increase B and C Vitamins** – B vitamins support immune and nervous system function as well as cell metabolism. In general you can get most of your necessary B vitamins in a healthy diet, with the exception of B12. It is good to make sure your multi-vitamin has a vitamin B complex included or you take additional B supplements. Vitamin C is important for the immune system as an antioxidant that also supports many key enzyme functions in the body. Vitamin C is easy to get in citrus fruits and other fresh fruits and veggies. It is also commonly found in multi-vitamins and supplements.

o **Consider a Detox** – Our bodies take in untold amounts of toxins through the pollution in our air and water, harmful chemicals in cleaning products, and the hormones and pesticides often found in our food. If your immune system is busy making sure these toxins aren't harming you, it has less energy to fight off bacteria and viruses. I suggest that you do a 3-5 day detoxification process at the beginning of fall and again in the spring. There are a number of detox systems you can find at your local health food store or you can join us for one of our fall detox programs at Your Wellness Connection.

o **Sleep** – Few things run down your immune system faster than restless or inadequate amounts of sleep. Sleep is when your body repairs itself and rejuvenates for the next day. During sleep is also when we process and store information for good brain function, which impacts both mental focus and regulation of hormones. While we are all different, the vast majority of us need 7-9 hours of restful sleep per night – catching up on the weekends doesn't count.

Now that you are on the right track to staying healthy by incorporating the suggestions above and providing many of the supplies for a healthy immune system, there are also a few things you can do to help prevent common illnesses this time of year.

Eat foods that are in season and organic, if possible. Fall and winter fruits and veggies are grounding and naturally prepare your body for a slower season. Keep it organic, if possible, so as to limit toxins. Limit foods that can cause mucous, like milk and cheese, while increasing foods that help dry up mucous, like cucumbers and pears.

Fall allergies can drag you down. Keep your nasal passages and sinuses clear and clean by regularly using a netti pot or Nasopure. You can also take Quercetin as a supplement. Quercetin is a phytochemical found in the red skin of apples and red onions. It is an exceptional antioxidant and is a natural anti-histamine and anti-inflammatory.

Keep your body warm. As the months get colder, keep your neck warm with a scarf, even if you don't think it is cold enough for a coat. Wear coats and gloves as well. Drink hot teas and consume

HEALTHY RECIPE

Mineral Broth

6 unpeeled carrots, sliced
2 medium yellow onions, cut into chunks
1 leek, both white and green parts, cut into thirds
1 bunch celery, cut into thirds
4 cloves garlic, whole
1/2 bunch flat-leaf parsley
4 medium red potatoes, quartered
3 sweet potatoes, quartered
2 strips kombu (seaweed)
3 bay leaves
12 black peppercorns

In a large stockpot, combine all the ingredients. Fill the pot with water to cover all vegetables; cover, and bring to a boil. Remove lid and simmer on low heat for a minimum of 2 hours. Strain the stock and bring to room temperature before refrigerating or freezing. Use vegetables as part of other meals.

hot soups.

As the leaves change color, the sun sets earlier and the air is crisp, take that as a cue from Mother Nature that it is time to slow down and prepare your body for the colder seasons to come.



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