

Holistic Health: Supporting Your Body During Sickness

BY JACKIE DOBRINSKA

Even the healthiest of us get sick from time to time. When the sneezing, coughing, aches, and fever start, we tend to blame our immune system for failing us yet again. Sickness, however, can really be an ally, an integral part of the body's strategy for achieving better health.

Confused? Think of it this way: we are all in the habit of "writing checks" that our bodies can't cash. By that, I mean we often run around trying to do too much, eating foods that lack nutrition, and then feeling stressed and overwhelmed. Add in some late nights and occasional overindulgences, and our bodies get overtired and burdened by toxins.

Since few of us carve out time to detox and slow down, our body's innate wisdom takes the reins by letting germs take us down. After all, pathogens only take root in a compromised system (see last month's article on building immunity).

Yet instead of following this inner wisdom, we often try to override the system, reaching for cough suppressants, decongestants, anti-inflammatories, and other over-the-counter drugs that allow us to keep up our frenetic pace. Eventually, these actions drive imbalances deeper into the body, perhaps later emerging as a more significant condition.

So the next time you start to feel a tickle in your throat or the start of a mild fever, take it as sign to listen to your body and slow down. Then give it a helping hand with these supportive tools.

Do nothing. Literally unplug from your normal activities. Stay in bed, take naps, and allow your body the space it needs to heal itself.

Nourish yourself. Unburden your system by eliminating sugar, dairy, and processed and hard-to-digest foods. Eat

steamed vegetables, nutritious grains, and nourishing soups with bone broth. Not just part of an old wives' tale, chicken soup is an immune-boosting power food.

Engage the energy. Homeopathic remedies offer gentle relief without harmful side effects and are best taken at early stages. Both Borion and BioKing brands carry cold and flu remedies that can shorten the duration of sickness.

Reach for your spice rack. Hot water mixed with lemon juice, local raw honey, fresh ginger, and as much cayenne pepper as you can handle kicks up your immune response while removing toxins from the system.

Support immune function with herbal medicine. Many

people have heard about echinacea for colds, but unfortunately few use it properly. Echinacea must be taken in high doses at the very first signs of a cold. Once a cold has set in, try immune-stimulating herbs such as usnea, yarrow, boneset, or olive leaf.

Take your vitamins.

Vitamins (especially vitamin A, vitamin C, and zinc) can shorten the duration of a cold.

Support your symptoms wisely. Recognize the purpose of your symptoms and then approach them properly. A fever, for example, is your body's way of killing off germs. Instead of suppressing it, let it run its course, as long as it stays below 101 degrees and lasts only a day or two. A cough is the way germs try to spread. Try wild cherry bark herbal syrup to soothe the spasms that cause a cough. Congestion also eliminates dead cells. Rinse your nasal passages four to five times per day with a neti pot.

This article contains general information about medical conditions and complementary treatment, and is not to be considered expert advice. Always consult your physician or other qualified healthcare provider before beginning any new treatment, diet, or fitness regimen. Jackie Dobrinska is a wellness coach and owner of Herbal Yogini. Find recipes and health tips at herbalyogini.com.

