



Cold & Flu

Get the latest information on cold & flu news and tips to help protect your family this cold & flu season

Cold and Flu Season and H1N1 A Naturopathic Perspective and a Comprehensive Approach

We are starting to get calls about how to handle cold and flu season this year, and then some specific concerns about H1N1. This information is designed as a general response; specific treatments will depend on symptoms and your overall health. This is not a discussion about vaccines, that conversation can be had on an individual basis.

First and foremost, pay attention and listen to your body. Most of us know when we are starting to come down with something: unusual fatigue, scratchy throat, tired eyes, and swollen glands in the neck, or body aches that don't fit our recent activity level. Don't wait until you are "full blown sick" to decide to take action.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of H1N1 are similar to seasonal influenza (flu) including headache, chills and cough followed by fever, loss of appetite, muscle aches and fatigue, runny nose, sneezing, watery eyes and throat irritation. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may occur in adults as well as in children. In more severe cases, or in people with chronic conditions, complications such as pneumonia may develop.

If you are experiencing these symptoms you should immediately contact your health care provider,

including your Naturopathic Doctor (ND).

NATUROPATHIC APPROACHES

In general, naturopathic physicians (NDs) are the physician-level experts on natural medicine and the use of herbs, nutrients, diet, and lifestyle changes to treat disease and promote health and wellness. Trained in the basic medical sciences and conventional diagnostics, naturopathic education includes therapeutic nutrition, botanical medicine, homeopathy, natural childbirth, classical Chinese medicine, hydrotherapy, naturopathic manipulative therapy, pharmacology and minor surgery. NDs practice true preventive and primary health care – engaging patients in health promotion and treating those with chronic disease to manage the entirety of their health.

Naturopathic Doctors can help you support your immune system with a natural approach to health. A strong immune system not only reduces the risk of getting sick, but may also reduce the severity of illness if you do get sick. Although viruses such as influenza don't respond to antibiotics, there are anti-viral therapies NDs can suggest to you to support your immune system's ability to fight viruses and therefore lessen the severity of many illnesses caused by viruses. As

Naturopathic Doctors are the most highly-trained physicians in natural approaches to illness and we are licensed, primary health care providers in British Columbia.

Even if you have a conventional family doctor (MD), your Naturopathic Doctor can complement their care with naturopathic treatment options.

First and foremost, don't wait until you are sick to decide how you might proceed with getting help.

BE PROACTIVE: MAKE A PREVENTION APPOINTMENT:

Call us, (250) 275-1672, and schedule a prevention appointment so we can advise you about what to keep on hand for prevention and treatment, based upon your specific health care picture.

Everyone is different and there are many ways to support the immune system naturally and many anti viral herbs and natural treatments. This way, if you do get sick, it may just be a telephone consultation to get you started on a treatment plan.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT:

In the words of Hippocrates, "Let Food Be Your Medicine and Medicine Be Your Food". Eating a diet high in complete protein, essential fatty acids, complex carbohydrates and plenty of

Prevention

fruits and vegetables is a strong way to support your immune system. Herbs, such as thyme, rosemary, oregano and garlic are powerful medicines, whether taken as a supplement or as an addition to your meals. Definitely avoid processed and sugary foods, including concentrated juices.

HANDS OFF AND RESPIRATORY

ETIQUETTE: Washing your hands regularly and thoroughly is one of the simplest ways to prevent the spread of germs. When you sneeze, do so into your sleeve, keep telephones and personal music devices wiped clean, wash your hands after being in public or after being with those you know are sick. If someone is sick in your home, give them a paper bag they dispose of frequently for tissues and keep something on hand, natural or conventional, to disinfect door knobs, etc...

KEEPING THE BARRIER INTACT:

Our mucous membranes (such as the

lining of our nose) need to be moist in order to act as an effective barrier to bacteria and viruses. Humidifiers at home or in the office will help, hot showers help, steam inhalations can be nice and just utilizing a saline nasal spray can be really helpful. Also, make sure you are drinking plenty of water.

KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND AND YOUR WITS ABOUT YOU:

It is important to keep a balance in your life, in whatever little ways you can to help reduce stress. Get a good night's sleep, laugh, get a bit of exercise and find some joy in every day.

SUPPORTING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

A multi-vitamin supplement, of a quality that your body can truly absorb, is critical. Even with the best diet, we all need one. The broad base of nutrients is crucial for optimal

health. Ours is a physician only product that you take 2x per day.

Vitamin D3 is one of the most critical nutrients for our immune system, and is especially important to be aware of here in this northern latitude—we don't get enough sun and the rays aren't strong enough to keep most people's vitamin D levels adequate. The amounts of vitamin D3 in a typical multivitamin, or in a calcium formula, are far from adequate.

Vitamin C is critical for immune function, and when we are sick or injured our needs increase. When more is needed it must come from the diet or our case, a supplement. For adults, taking 3,000 – 6,000 mg daily is ideal. A high dose given by injection can be very helpful.

Vitamin A can be given in higher than usual doses for brief periods of time to support immune function and shorten the duration of an illness, but it also has to decrease rather quickly to avoid toxicity.

Health Canada Examines Vitamin D for Swine Flu Protection

Vitamin D has in the past been correlated with the flu virus. Researchers have pondered the connection between D and influenza because the flu tends to hit hardest in winter, when the general population is usually subjected to a deficiency of the "sunshine" vitamin.

Starting this year, Canada's Public Health Agency has plans to test individuals who contract the H1N1 virus to ascertain their levels of vitamin D. If they determine a link, then a relatively simple, "natural" and inexpensive protocol could be employed to prevent the pandemic and scale back the need for vaccinations.

Early work in the 1940s, in experimental animal models, indicated that mice that receive diets low in vitamin D are more susceptible to experimental swine flu infection than those that receive adequate vitamin D (Young, 1946).

"Influenza infection is correlated geographically and seasonally with levels of solar ultraviolet radiation (Cannell, 2006). Given that vitamin D is synthesized in our skin on exposure to sunlight, low serum levels of 25(OH) vitamin D in winter months appear to correlate with the occurrence of seasonal influenza in the winter. However a direct causal relationship between low vitamin D levels and the risk of influenza remains to be proven."

New research suggests that vitamin D induces the production of antimicrobial substances in the body that possess neutralizing activity against a variety of infectious agents including influenza virus (Doss, 2009)."

Vitamin D levels are easily checked with a simple blood test. You can request it from your family physician or here at our office.

The preferred form of vitamin D, D3, is best absorbed in a fat soluble liquid supplement. Our office carries a form that has 1000 IU per drop.

...vitamin D deficiency is common in the winter, and activated vitamin D, has profound effects on human immunity...

...An interventional study showed that vitamin D reduces the incidence of respiratory infections in children.

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Appointment
with
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or
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