

Worried about the flu?

By: Dr. Julianne M. Forbes, N.D.

Has the flu vaccine shortage gotten you worried about this upcoming flu season? The solution isn't just a vaccination shot, but a preventative regime of natural healthcare, designed to enhance your immune system as prescribed by a Naturopathic doctor.

Some of you might be wondering what a Naturopathic doctor is? A Naturopathic doctor is an expert in natural therapeutics, which includes Clinical Nutrition, Homeopathy, Hydrotherapy, Botanical Medicine, Chinese Medicine, Life-style Counseling, and Stress Management.

Research has shown that by using natural supplements can be a healthy alternative for preventing disease such as the flu, along with a healthy diet, daily exercise, and at least eight hours of sleep per night. A Naturopathic doctor's main focus is in treating the whole patient's wellness, and helping their bodies work to restore some of their Acquired Immunity.

Let's talk about Acquired Immunity vs. Vaccine Immunity. As a child, you are exposed to a few illnesses such as the common cold. During this process, you were creating anti-bodies which has allowed you to help fight off illnesses today. This is called Acquired Immunity. By using vaccines, your immune system is stressed artificially, and does not duplicate a natural protection. The purpose of a healthy natural protection or Acquired Immunity is to give you the capacity of fighting off diseases and ailments naturally. As a person grows older, we tend to lose some of our Acquired Immunity, making us susceptible to diseases and ailments. One of the benefits of using natural supplements is that you get the same effect as a vaccine with little to no risk of side effects. At times, using food with herbs or supplements can also strengthen the immune system.

I have enclosed a special recipe for building the immune system. This recipe includes herbs such as Astragalus and Ginger root. Both have been used in the traditional Chinese Medicine and have a general prevention of infection. The Astragalus has been used to boost immune function for treating viral infections and even cancer. Ginger root is a very warming herb and has been used as a common cold treatment, where it can relieve general symptoms such as aches, slight fevers, headaches, nasal congestion, and runny nose. Many Asian mushrooms are useful for enhancing white blood cell activity which is important for fighting off illness. In this recipe I suggest Shitake mushrooms since they are the most available usually. Enjoy and keep well.

Immune Strengthening Soup:

Sauté: 2tsp. toasted sesame oil
 1 chopped onion
 3-5 Sticks astragalus
 3-5 cloves garlic
 2-3 pieces of ginger
 1-2 reishi mushrooms, crumbled
 ½ -1 cup cubed tofu
 2 cups chopped vegetables of choice
 (carrots, celery, beet tops, greens, cabbage, kale, dikon,
 lotus root, turnips, etc.)
 1 cup chopped mushrooms of choice (shiitake, cordyceps, etc.)
 ½ cup of wakame or kombu (seaweed)

Add: 8 cups spring or purified water.
 Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, covered for 15 minutes.

Whisk: 2-3 tablespoons miso into small amount of water and add to soup.

 Simmer for 1-2 hours.

(Soup base may be started with beef or chicken bones to strengthen bone marrow)