

The Wellness Family

Dr. Cuperus Keeps You Informed

The Benefits of a Strong Immunity

No one likes getting sick and we like it even less when it's our children. The question is, how do we avoid getting sick? How can we be sure that the latest "bug" going around isn't going to hit every member of our family? The answer is a healthy immune system.

What is the Immune System?

The immune system is the body's natural defense against germs, bacteria or other illness causing foreign invaders. When an antigen or infecting organism enters the body the immune system begins to create antibodies to fight off the illness or disease.

Once this antibody has been created a person is typically immune from further infection, because a strong immune system has a capacity to remember the antibody and reproduce it rapidly to overcome the beginning stages of the illness.

What are the dangers of a weak immunity?

Clearly the first and most obvious danger is that we are more susceptible to illness once we've been exposed. However, there is the additional concern that once we have succumbed, we will find it more difficult to fight off the infection and will remain sick longer.

A typical cold shouldn't last more than 3 or 4 days, but someone who is not living a wellness lifestyle and suffers from a weakened immune system could be ill for up to a week.

Does my diet affect my immunity?

The fact is that many of our daily choices can weaken our immune system, and the most critical is our diet. Research has proven that a diet high in bleached flour, salt and sugar can weaken our immune system leaving us susceptible to infecting organisms.

Perhaps most surprising is the negative effect that dairy can have on our immunity. While milk contains calcium and magnesium, which are vital nutrients for our body, and dairy products tend to be rich in Zinc, the extra

work required by our body to digest these complicated proteins and milk-sugars wear out the body.

Additionally, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, cow's milk is the leading cause of food allergies in children. It has also been proven that milk creates mucus which can lead to respiratory problems that may include chronic coughs and asthma as well as frequent sinus infections and ear infections. This is why many healthcare professionals suggest and agree that reducing or eliminating milk and dairy products from your diet completely will positively affect your immune system.

Equally beneficial is a diet rich in vitamins and minerals. These immunity boosting foods include but are not limited to the following:



"Our bodies have an inborn ability to heal themselves; our immune system is our... natural defense against illness."

- Vitamins A, C, E, Beta-Carotene and Selenium are antioxidants, which are part of our body's natural defense mechanism, and are consumed in fruits and vegetables making special note that the darker green the vegetable the more rich it is in vitamins and minerals.
- The mineral Zinc is important because of the role it plays in increasing our resistance to infection and is found in red meats and eggs.
- Magnesium is another important mineral and is available in legumes.

Does sleep affect my immunity?

Recent clinical studies have found that sleep plays a crucial role in a properly functioning immune system. A lack of proper rest can actually cause the same alterations to our immunity as those caused by depression and alcoholism.

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Making sure that you and your entire family get enough rest each night will positively affect your immunity. Busy lives and over-scheduling our children can make this seem impossible, but the following chart is the recommended hours of sleep necessary to keep you and your family healthy.

Age	Total Hours Sleep	Naps in Hours
6 Months	14-15	3-4
1-2 Years	13-14	1-3
3 Years	12-13	1
4 Years	11-12	no longer naps
5-9 Years	10-11	no longer naps
10-15 Years	9-10	no longer naps
16+ Years	approx. 8 hours	no longer naps

How does exercise affect my immunity?

A sedentary lifestyle that has us or our children sitting for hours at a time in a stuffy house, office or classroom can negatively impact our immune system.

The first risk we run, obviously, is that bacteria and viruses have nowhere to go in an enclosed space, and so, will quickly settle on us as their host. The second factor to consider is, when we are up moving around, we are breathing deeper, opening our lungs and getting more oxygen to the cells of our body.

Making a conscious effort to move your body daily will strengthen your immunity. It doesn't have to be a trip to the gym; simply getting outside for 30 minutes a day to walk around the block can positively impact your health and boost your immune system.

The Chiropractic Factor

The nervous system is made up of the brain, spinal cord and nerves; it is this system that controls all the

other systems of your body, including the immune system. When the vertebrae in your spine are even slightly displaced, this can cause nerve interference (vertebral subluxation).

The concept of treating disease in conventional medicine overlooks the importance of prevention. Utilizing Chiropractic care is preventative instead of reactionary. Consider this example: it's more sensible to maintain your car rather than drive it into the ground and have to fix it when it's broken down. Wisdom would say to change the oil rather than wait until your engine has seized and the same could be said of our bodies.

Our bodies have an inborn ability to heal themselves; our immune system is our body's first and most natural defense against illness. When we maintain our nervous system this keeps all of our systems working at their optimum efficiency.

Thomas Edison once said, "The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease." It is when we choose to take care of our body as a whole that our body more effectively takes care of us.

For more information...

www.icpa4kids.org
www.eatingwell.com
www.healthychild.com

Resources:

www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-148765557.html

www.cnn.com/2007/HEALTH/diet.fitness/11/14/cl.best.defense/index.html

Dear Patient,

Dr. Cuperus is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's wellness lifestyle choices.

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