WHOLE CHIROPRACTIC HEALTHCARE

Nutritional Support for a Cold*

Most of the yucky feeling of a cold (or even the flu) comes from our immune system's hyper-inflammatory response to the virus. This response is a necessary component of healing, but it adds to the already over-inflamed state many of us are in—just like the extra vehicles on the road during Friday-afternoon rush hour overwhelm the roads' capacity, the extra stress of fighting the bug becomes too much for our bodies to handle and we feel sick!

Along with **plenty of rest and fluids**, the following anti-inflammatory and immune-support boosters can help your system cope more effectively. If you've just started to feel cold symptoms, you may still be able to prevent the full-blown cold; if you're already sick, you may be able to decrease the length or severity of your illness.

Most of the below are considered "maintenance" doses, and all of these methods work best if you already have a well-rounded diet with appropriate supplemental support as recommended by us or another holistic doctor who is up-to-date on the research.

- **Vitamin D3/cholecalciferol:** Linked closely to your immune system in many ways, including internal production of an antibiotic peptide called cathelicidin, normal D3 levels are crucial to good health. In the Northern latitudes our levels decline in the fall and winter along with the hours of sunlight. Your blood levels should be above 30 ng/mL; the Vitamin D Council suggests that levels above 50 ng/mL (and below 80 ng/mL) indicate optimal health.

  Assuming they work indoors, adults can usually take 4,000–5,000 IU of D3 per day; kids can usually take 1,000–2,000 IU per day, depending on their weight.

  The only easily accessible natural food sources of D3 are fatty fish, liver, and egg yolks, with salmon being the "best" (a 3-oz piece only supplies 450 IU, though). Fortified dairy is also not an optimal source of vitamin D because these products come with both inflammatory proteins and relatively low amounts of D3. Supplementation is therefore best to achieve consistent levels of vitamin D in your blood. However, because the physiology and thus dosing of D3 are more complicated than a short paragraph can convey, I prefer to discuss specifics as part of a holistic primary care consultation. Find additional information about vitamin D on our website: https://www.wholechiro.com/d-faqs

- **Zinc gluconate/acetate:** Zinc is another nutrient that's integral to multiple aspects of immune function.

  Adults over 18 can generally take up to 75 mg/day of zinc in lozenge form.

  Foods high in zinc include pumpkin seeds, kiwi, and green leafy veggies.
  Find kids' doses and more zinc info at http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Zinc-HealthProfessional/#h4

- **Vitamin C:** Most adults can safely take 500–1,000 mg of vitamin C per day for maintenance purposes. Food sources of vitamin C include cruciferous vegetables (like broccoli, cauliflower, kale, and Brussels sprouts), guava, citrus (especially lemons), kiwi, strawberries, chili peppers, and yellow/orange bell peppers. (Yellow/orange peppers have approximately twice as much vitamin C as red peppers, which have twice as much as green peppers, which have twice as much as an orange! Note that orange juice—even if it's labeled 100% natural and/or organic—is NOT the best source of vitamin C because of its high sugar content.)

  For short periods, high doses of vitamin C may be taken to help boost white blood cell production and as an antioxidant. Use a time-release and/or buffered form of this vitamin to reduce possible loose-bowel effects.

  http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminC-HealthProfessional/
  http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/vitamins/vitaminC/

- **Take elderberry extract** as directed on the product's label (available as a pill, liquid/syrup, or tincture). Elderberry has been found to be helpful for immune support, but also specifically to inhibit growth of the H1N1 virus and eight other flu strains (so far).

  You can easily make your own elderberry syrup with this recipe (on the Resources page of www.WholeChiro.com).

- **If you are congested, consider avoiding dairy products.** Some people find that A1-type milk-containing products cause them to produce more mucus and to feel even stuffier. The high sugar content (including *lactose*) of many dairy products, including pre-sweetened yogurt and ice cream, also makes them a less-than-ideal choice for supporting the body while it's healing. Plenty of fruits and veggies (and minimal processed foods) are best.

- **Probiotics/prebiotics:** Since antibiotics are common during cold/flu season, repopulating your gut microbiome with probiotics + prebiotics afterward is usually recommended. (Taking a daily dose of a probiotic supplement may aid in overall systemic immunity, including for your respiratory system, although research is still preliminary.) I prefer refrigerated brands of probiotics that contain large numbers of individual organisms, diverse bacteria species, and prebiotics to feed your new colonists (get it, *colon*-ists? 😉).

**These general guidelines are for informational purposes and are not to be taken as specific recommendations unless you are an active patient of Whole Chiropractic and have received specific instructions from our doctor(s). Your individual needs may vary based on your circumstances and/or medications and conditions. If you are an active patient of Whole Chiropractic, please call the office with any questions or ask the doctor at your next appointment. If you are not a current active patient of Whole Chiropractic, why not become one? Otherwise, please consult your own holistic healthcare provider.*