

Your Immunity and the Common Cold

FACTS:

- The common cold remains the most common ENT disorder and infection can be attributed to over 200 different viruses.
- A cold which lasts more than a week is the most likely cause of sinus and ear infections.
- A normal, healthy child can be expected to get 6-10 colds per year as the “young” immune system gets first time exposure to the great selection of viruses which present themselves in our environment.
- Healthy adolescents should expect 2-4 colds per year.
- A healthy adult should expect no more than 1 cold per year.
- In developing countries Upper Respiratory Tract infections are the number 1 cause of death for children under 5 years, due to complications such as pneumonia.
- Antibiotics are completely ineffective at treating any viral infection and will in fact only debilitate the bodies own immune system, increasing the possibility of worsening the viral infection and exacerbating complications.
- Antibiotics should only ever be used to fight bacterial infections which have got out of control.
- Use of antibiotics for ear infections, tonsillitis, and sinus infections will often actually increase the likelihood of repeated episodes of infection.

FACTORS THAT WEAKEN YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM:

- A poor functioning digestive system (70% + of your immune system is in your gut!)
- Physical, emotional or psychological stress
- Lack of exercise or too much exercise
- Lack of sleep, rest and relaxation
- Diet high in processed refined foods at the expense of consuming fresh fruit, vegetables, good quality protein and whole foods generally
- Exposure to pollution, cigarette smoke, cold and damp homes
- Over-use of antibiotics

How you can do your best to prevent Common disorders of the Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) which threaten you and your family each winter!

1. Eat 5+ servings of good quality (preferably organic) and good variety of coloured fruits and vegetables per day, as well as good quality protein, nuts, seeds and berries of course, to cover all the essential nutrient bases.
2. avoid sugars, white flour and excess alcohol – they all deplete your immune system and have no nutritional value
3. Identify any allergens that could be suppressing your immune system and causing irritation to the mucous membranes, which then inflame the tissue, providing easy hosting for infection to take hold. Food intolerance in young children is most commonly the driver behind ear infections, and identifying the problem prevents miserable pain, overuse of antibiotics and unnecessary intervention with grommets.

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4. Drink plenty of good fresh filtered water (at least 6-8 glasses per day) Herbal teas count but coffee and gumboot teas do not as they are actually diuretics!
 5. Exercise for at least ½ an hour daily
 6. The key to life is a healthy colon! Make this your family mantra! And if you or anyone in your family has any digestive dis-orders they need to be fixed! (and in my experience that's usually pretty easy). Remember 70% of your immune system is actually in your gut.
 7. Reduce/manage stress – the #1 driver of a breakdown in the immune system
 8. Be sure to always get a good sleep, and if sleep is a problem come and see me about it!
 9. Practice good hygiene - washing hands is the best way to reduce the transferral of viruses
 10. Laugh, sing and be happy – positive energy brings good health with it.
 11. Don't hesitate to call me for advice on what is the best way for you and your family to stay healthy this winter.

It has been widely publicized recently that the overuse (abuse actually) of antibiotics now means we have resistant strains of bacteria which have created a whole new phase of life-threatening illness in our first world society. Preventative health care for the whole family has never been more vital.

The secret to getting sick less is to build a strong, healthy immune system.

Make sure your whole families immune systems are fully functioning through this germ laden season.

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