



## WINTER IMMUNE SUPPORT GUIDE

Staying immune through the winter season requires a robust state of health, based primarily on *good nutrition*. Sunshine, movement, sleep, stress management, and healthy social-emotional connections all play into optimal immune function as well.

This guide is for informational purposes only and is not a replacement for medical advice by your licensed medical doctor. Products mentioned in this guide are not intended to treat or cure any disease, nor are they a replacement for drugs or medicines. Please consult your doctor immediately if you suspect infection or illness.

Since key nutrients are required for your body to make immune molecules that attack winter viruses and bacterial infections, a good diet is the first line of defense. In addition, the majority of your immune system lies in the gut. A gut that is compromised by bad food or dysbiosis will ultimately be unable to digest and assimilate key nutrients, and its immune function will be compromised.

Sugar, refined carbohydrates, and food additives dramatically block immune system function. 4 grams of sugar (just one teaspoon) blocks immune function for up to 5 hours. No wonder winter colds and viruses wreak havoc starting in October after Halloween Candy, Thanksgiving pies, Christmas cookies, Valentine's chocolates, and Easter egg fillings!

The best diet is rich in organic vegetables, healthy fats (from coconut, olives, avocado, nuts and seeds), clean protein from healthy, humanely raised, grass-pastured animals, and organic fruit (especially berries, in moderation). That is the basis of an immune-supporting, low-inflammatory diet.

What is not included in that diet recommendation? Processed grains! Processed grains are usually a combination of wheat (inflammatory gluten), pesticides, seed oils, and sugars. An immune system recipe for disaster!

# DAILY YEAR-ROUND SUPPLEMENT BASICS FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH

Beyond eating a nutrient rich, varied diet, the following baseline supplements are recommended to build a robust immune system. Starting vitamins well in advance of the winter season will help to mitigate the potential of contracting a winter illness.

- 1. A high quality multivitamin.** Vitamins are synergistic with one another, thus taking a multi ensures you are getting them all, and in doses that compliment one another. The best multi's will be in capsule form that you can pull apart, not in chalky tablets. In addition, avoid multi's with "folic acid" on the label. B-vitamins, like folic acid, should be in the methylated forms for maximum availability. My favorite: **Pure Encapsulations PureGenomics Multi.**
- 2. Omega 3.** Omega 3's are incorporated into your cell walls to help them be less penetrable to viruses. Cell walls become weakened with too much sugar and overconsumption of Omega 6 fatty acids found in processed foods. In addition, Omega 3's lower inflammation which can impair immune function. Cheap Omega 3's (like from Costco) will be more likely to contain heavy metals and will not be tested for purity. My favorite: **Biotics Research Biomega 1000.** Dosage is 1000 mg minimum per day up to 3000 mg for inflammatory issues or illness.
- 3. Probiotic.** The microbiome in your gut heavily directs your immune system. An unbalanced microbiome releases inflammatory molecules and increases risk of disease. The healthy microbes that live in your colon need constant replenishment with a daily probiotic. A high quality probiotic is essential for it to travel thru your harsh acidic stomach and get to where they need to in the colon to populate and direct your immune system. Many probiotics are dead in the bottle, or die right in the acidic stomach, never reaching the colon where they want to live. My favorite: **Microbiome Labs MegaSpore Biotic.**
- 4. Vitamin D.** Most people are deficient in Vitamin D and don't know it. Always test your levels at least once a year. My favorite: **Designs for Health Vitamin D Supreme.**

# THE “I MIGHT BE GETTING SICK” OR “I DON’T WANT YOU TO GET ME SICK” PROTOCOL

But what happens when we feel the sickness “twinge”? Or perhaps we've been around someone that's sick, or we have someone in our home that is sick? Start the preventive protocol:

## **At the first possible symptom (or as a preventive):**

1. Rinse 2x daily (or up to 4x daily) with a neti-pot filled with Xclear saline packets<sup>1</sup> and iodine. One dropper full of Biotics Research Iodine<sup>2</sup>. Povidone Iodine from the pharmacy (.5%) will also do but might have a funny taste.
2. 10,000 iu each of Vitamin A (in retinol form, not Beta-Carotene) and Vitamin D at each meal.
3. Take a zinc acetate lozenge every 2 hours for the first couple days. Suck over the course of 30 minutes, do not chew.
4. Take 3000 mg of Vitamin C daily.
5. Take all baseline daily supplements as described above.

---

<sup>1</sup> Find at any local pharmacy like CVS or Walgreens

<sup>2</sup> Iodine should be not be used in any one with a thyroid disorder, undergoing treatment with radioactive iodine, kidney failure, dermatitis herpetiformis, or lithium therapy.

## **HOW THE IMMUNE SYSTEM WORKS**

It's important to remember how the immune system is designed to fight infections. It takes the immune system on average 10 days to identify, attack and clear infections of any kind. That's if your immune system is operating optimally. So patience is the key here. The first 4-5 days, the innate immune system activates – it's nonspecific and starts attacking the "invader". You feel sick, achy, feverish and tired – all because the immune system needs you to rest so it can do its job. Taking an advil to mask the aches and lower the fever doesn't actually make you better. The immune system still has to work in the background, and now even harder because you aren't resting. In addition, studies have shown taking advil or similar actually impairs immune function resulting in longer sickness. After day 5, the adaptive immune system kicks in (these are your T-cells), which start to mark the invader and create antibodies. This takes several days, and likely you aren't feeling yourself. On day 10, symptoms should be dramatically lessening.

## **FEVER IS GOOD**

The body has an amazing ability to heal itself when you give it rest, adequate nutrients, and let it do what it's designed to do. Fever is always a good thing – it helps the body fight infection since it knows that viruses and bacteria don't live as well in higher temps. Taking Advil to lower fever only makes your body have to work harder, and keeps populations of invaders higher. Now, fevers upwards of 103+ starts to get scary and can become dangerous without intervention. But riding out the uncomfortableness of 101, 102, is what you should do. Peppermint oil, placed on the base of the neck and feet can lower fever more mildly, by about a point. This can often take the edge off without lowering it too much like a NSAID would do.

## THE “OH NO, I AM SICK” PROTOCOLS

So you're sick, now what? Your body is burning through nutrients at a higher rate trying to crank out immune molecules to fight your infection. Rest is key, as is getting in adequate, digestible protein so your body has the building blocks to make these molecules. Bone broth or collagen is an ideal substance for this.

1. For any sinus or throat symptoms: Continue to rinse 4x daily with a neti-pot filled with Xclear saline packets and iodine. One dropper full of Biotics Research Iodine<sup>3</sup>. Povidone Iodine from the pharmacy (.5%) will also do but might have a funny taste.
2. 20,000 iu of Vitamin D at each meal.
3. 10,000 iu Vitamin A at each meal.
4. Take a zinc acetate lozenge every 2 hours. Suck over the course of 30 minutes, do not chew.
5. Take 3000 mg of Vitamin C daily.
6. Take Vital Nutrients Immune Support – 2 caps, 3 x daily. The herbs in this formula boost innate immune function, which is needed early on in any infection.
7. Ensure extra hydration of pure filtered water.
8. Consider drinking a tea mixture of 8 oz hot water, a squeeze of one lemon, manuka honey, 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar, and a shake of cinnamon.

Continue to take this protocol for the full 10 days, or until you are completely symptom free.

---

<sup>3</sup> Iodine should be not be used in any one with a thyroid disorder, undergoing treatment with radioactive iodine, kidney failure, dermatitis herpetiformis, or lithium therapy.

Here's some additional immune support ideas based on symptoms:

**IF THERE IS MUCUS PRESENT (in the lungs or sinuses), TAKE:**

1. 500 mg NAC (N-acetyl-cysteine) 3 times daily with a lot of water.
2. MucoStop enzymes – 2 capsules 3 times daily. These only work on an empty stomach! Take one hour before eating, or a minimum of 2 hours after eating.

**FOR BODY ACHES**

1. Try oscillococcinum every 15 minutes for the first hour, then 3 times daily as needed.
2. Try Genexa Flu Fix every 15 minutes for the first hour, then 3 times daily as needed.

**FOR SUSPECTED BACTERIAL INFECTION**

1. Integrative Therapeutics Y Formula – 2 capsules, 4 times daily.
2. Doterra OnGuard – put one drop in water and gargle then swallow; studies have shown it is highly antimicrobial to strep strains.

**FOR SORE THROAT**

1. Manuka honey – choose a UMF rating above 20. Manuka honey is highly antibacterial and can be used in Throat Coat Tea for relief.
2. Biocidin Throat Spray as needed.
3. Doterra OnGuard – put one drop in water and gargle then swallow; studies have shown it is highly antimicrobial to strep strains.

**FOR LUNG INVOLVEMENT**

1. Put Doterra Breathe Essential Oil Blend in an oil diffuser and inhale deeply for 10 minutes every hour. This will open the airways and act as an astringent.
2. For a croupy cough, use Bioron Spongia Tosta 30 C – 5 pellets every 15 minutes for the first hour, then every several hours as needed.

## A NOTE ABOUT ZINC

Zinc is a critical nutrient for our immune system function. In fact, the highly controversial, yet effective drug Hydroxychloroquine, is effective because its primary action is to aid in shuttling zinc into the cell where it can act as an anti-viral.

Adequate zinc levels are important for overall immune function. There are several ways to test for zinc status in the body. The first, and most direct way, is to run an intracellular micronutrient test. This is costly and requires phlebotomy, but you can order that [here](#). Second, you can take liquid zinc, hold it in your mouth, and if after 15-30 seconds you taste nothing, then you have a high need for zinc. If you experience a strong metal taste, it is likely your zinc levels are adequate. Third, you can look at your Complete Metabolic Panel that is often routinely run by doctors offices with most blood work. The marker called "Alkaline Phosphatase" or "ALP" is a zinc-dependent enzyme. Your level should be mid-range in the reference range. If it is lower than mid-range, you could use more zinc supplementation.

While zinc is very important, what I find in my practice is that it is routinely over supplemented. It's usually found in multivitamins, immune support blends, and by itself. Often clients are taking over 100 mg of zinc when its all added together. While zinc supplements support general immune function, overdoing it on a daily basis is not recommended because of its risk of depleting copper. Zinc over 50 mg daily will deplete copper, a critical mineral. It's a good idea to ensure you are getting 2-3 mg of copper daily when increasing zinc consumption during colds.

To get zinc from the diet, animal foods are a much higher source and more bioavailable than plant foods. If you are eating a primarily plant-based diet, then you might benefit from supplementation. The best way to know if you are absorbing zinc from your diet is relative to the amount of phytates in your diet. If you are eating a lot of grains, nuts and seeds, then the phytates in that food will pull minerals from the other foods you are eating. Thus, you will absorb less zinc if you combine zinc rich foods with grains, nuts and seeds. Sprouting, soaking or fermenting these grains, nuts and seeds will help lower that phytate content.

## ZINC FOR THE COMMON COLD

In order to kill the common cold, or prevent you from catching it at all, zinc must be a lozenge in the form of zinc acetate. Studies show lozenges decrease the median duration of a cold by just under 5 days, and the mean duration of a cold by 7 days<sup>4</sup>.

Most zinc capsules are in the form of zinc salts (zinc gluconate, zinc acetate, zinc glycinate, zinc orotate). When zinc is free and not bound to anything (ionic zinc), it has a positive charge that will exert effects on nasal and adenoid tissue in the throat – which are the 2 main sites of cold infections.

Ionic zinc has 2 actions:

1. It inhibits the activation of viral polypeptides that are used in the replication of the cold virus
2. It inhibits the body's production of ICAM-1 (intracellular adhesion molecule 1). This is essentially the doc that allows the virus to grab hold of the cell and enter it.

The trick to getting ionic zinc into your mouth and sinus cavities is to use a lozenge in the form of zinc salts that will readily release from its free ionic form in the tissues at the right time. Zinc acetate lozenges are the best at doing this in the ph of the saliva.

Here's the trick – in order to be effective, zinc must act on the tissue before you present with symptoms (perhaps upon known exposure) or at the first twinge of “I might be getting sick”. Once the virus has taken hold and is peaking with active symptoms, zinc's action readily declines and you may find it ineffective.

RECOMMENDED ZINC: Life Extension Enhanced Zinc Lozenges.

RECOMMENDED DOSAGE: 1 lozenge every 2 hours for the first several days, letting it dissolve in your mouth slowly over 30 minutes. The ionic zinc must be present on the tissues long enough to diffuse across their cellular membranes and accumulate in the cells to create an inhibitory action.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://chrismasterjohnphd.substack.com/p/030-zinc-definitely-fights-colds>



