



The Ginkgo Tree

Immune System

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The immune system is a very complex system of the body – comprised of the thymus gland, the spleen, bone marrow and a vast network of lymph nodes. 24 hours a day, for all the days of your life, your immune system is searching for cells that show signs of infection or cancerous changes, by the help of stimulated white blood cells encouraged and maintained by specialized immune compounds, such as interferon.

We aimed at highlighting 5 key lifestyle choices to maintain bodily health and combat cold and flu

Tis the season!

Herbal assistance

While our lifestyle choices can prove to be a profound medicine, it is also important to use accompanying herbs to nourish and sustain our health and wellbeing. The most notable herbs used to support immunity are as follows:

Echinacea, the most renowned of the immune-boosting herbs, works to increase the number of white blood cells in the body therein increasing the body's defenses to germs. A combination of *Echinacea purpurea*, *Echinacea angustifolia* and *Echinacea pallida* is specific blend to fight colds, flu and fevers. One of nature's natural antibiotics. It also helps to relieve the symptoms and shorten the duration of upper respiratory tract infections, ear aches and herpes.

Mushrooms (Reishi, Enoki, Shitake or Oyster) – Japanese mushrooms are a great immunity booster. They are also loaded with ergothioneine, a powerful antioxidant, that does not get destroyed during the cooking process.

Garlic is a pungent herb and one of nature's natural antibiotics. Due to the powerful sulfur-containing nutrients and immune stimulators within garlic, it is classified as a superfood herb. Consumption of garlic daily may be one of the best defenses against infection and inflammatory-based disease. Garlic is a powerful antibiotic, antiviral and antifungal agents that have an incredible immune-stimulating effect. Additionally, garlic is also used to lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and help prevent/reverse cancer.



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Oregano oil is an extraordinarily powerful natural antibiotic. Oregano has been found in a recent study to be significantly better than all of the 18 currently used antibiotics in the treatment of MRSA staph infections. The strong phenol antioxidants destroy pathogenic bacteria, viruses and yeasts. The USDA ranks oregano's antioxidant capacity anywhere from 3 to 20 times higher than any other herb. Oregano has four times the antioxidant power of blueberries, 12 times that of oranges and 42 times greater than apples. Oregano oil has been classically used as a disinfectant, an aid for ear, nose and throat/respiratory infections, candidiasis and any sort of bacterial or viral condition. Additionally, it works to suppress inflammatory mediators and cancer cell production. Oregano oil is more potent than the dried herb; however, the dried version still contains many powerful health benefits. Studies have shown that carvacrol, a phenol antioxidant within oregano, has powerful anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial activity when applied to food or taken in supplement form. Oregano also contains rosmarinic acid which has very strong cancer-fighting properties.

Burdock root is like candy to our gut flora! This is huge, it feeds us. It very high in vitamin B6 and Manganese, works to strengthen the lymphatic system and purify the blood. It is considered to be a leading digestive aid that detoxifies the liver. You may cook with it, make tea or turn it into a tincture with highly purified alcohol.

Astragalus is from China, this herb stimulates the immune system and aids in digestion and adrenal gland functions, it is also a diuretic. The effectiveness of this herb is due to polysaccharides, saponins and flavonoids. It has also been taken to combat the common cold and flu. Its digestive health benefits demonstrate the lowering of stomach acidity, resulting to an increase in the body's metabolic rates and the promotion of waste elimination.

Cats Claw, is most commonly used for stomach issues. Of course, this relates to immunity because of the connection between gut health to overall health. When the gut is healthy, it rewards us with a clearer mind, better mood, more vitality, and a stronger immune capacity. It contains oxindole alkaloids enhancing the immune system's ability to engulf and destroy pathogens.

Of course, there are many more (Turmeric, Ginkgo, Ginseng) and all available through The Ginkgo Tree to purchase and try either as a tea or tincture. Some of our favourites for immune boosting properties are:

Echinacea and Goldenseal Combination Tincture, one of my personal favourites! Supports a healthy immune response in the respiratory, digestive and urinary systems of adults and children, as well as the skin.

Echinacea and Reishi mushroom Combination is another sought after blend.



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Choose immune-boosting foods

Diets high in refined, processed or sugary foods is a recipe for lowered immunity as sugar feeds and helps proliferate bad bacteria. To build strong immune function, it is important to eat a diet rich in fresh vegetables and fruits for antioxidants, and high-quality proteins and healthful fats, especially monosaturated fats, to repair tissues and create healthy immune cells.

Beneficial bacteria such as lactobacillus acidophilus, found in yoghurt, is particularly useful in strengthening immune function as it works directly at aiding digestion.

Exercise

Science has proven regular exercise – at least 30 minutes most days of the week- increases the number of all types of white blood cells protecting your immunity. In contrast, exercising too often or too aggressively can temporarily hinder immune function.

Reduce stress

Easier said than done, for many, but the immune-boosting effects of meditation, massage and other deep relaxation exercises are our number one defence against emotional stressors, depression and anxiety. When too much resistance is built up in stress, it reeks havoc on our adrenal hormones that in result suppress the activity of the thymus gland and white blood cells compromising our immunity.

Get adequate sleep

When our bodies move into a state of deep rest, it works to repair and regenerate cells important for overall health, which is balanced by our immunity. Our bodies have a very intelligent biorhythm that gets interrupted by our excessive use of technology, eating and alcohol. It is important to keep these habits moderate to get proficient amounts of sleep.

Cautionary: Consult a health care practitioner before use: if you have an immune system disorder or you are taking immunosuppressants. Consult a health care practitioner if symptoms worsen or persist.



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Workshop Blends

Mushroom Immunity Tincture Blend 100ml

40ml Reishi Mushroom
15ml Lions Mane Mushroom
15ml Maitake Mushroom
15ml Shitake Mushroom
15ml Poria cocos Mushroom

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Immunity Tea

1 part Elderberries
1 part Elderflowers
1 part Chamomile
1 part Rose hips
1 part Astragalus
1 part Echinacea

To Brew: Using a tea ball, bag or loose, use 1 tsp of tea per 1 cup of hot water and steep for at least 20 minutes or overnight for a more potent herbal infusion. Sweeten with raw honey for additional healing properties.

Organic Elderberries – Rich in antioxidants and vitamins A, B, and C. Used to fight colds, coughs, flu, bacterial and viral infections. Bioflavonoids along with other proteins in elderberry destroy the ability for a cold or flu virus to infect the cell.

Organic Elderflowers - Wonderful for the respiratory system. Helps keep allergies at bay and the sinuses clear. Also wonderful for fevers, especially those that come on suddenly. It helps support the body's natural defenses.

Organic Chamomile – Very calming and anti-inflammatory. Wonderful for stomach ailments and colds. Also has antibacterial properties.

Organic Rose Hips – Contain 50% more vitamin C than oranges! Excellent immune system booster. Also high in vitamin A and a variety of antioxidants.

Organic Astragalus – Wonderful immune enhancing herb. Useful in preventing the common cold.

Organic Echinacea Purpurea – Stimulates the cells so they can fight infection. Has anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and anti-fungal properties.



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Immunity Soup Recipe

1 ½ tsp extra virgin olive oil
2 large onions, thinly sliced
3 garlic cloves, mashed
1 tbsp. minced fresh ginger
4-ounce shiitake mushrooms, steamed, thinly slice (2 cups)
2 large carrots, thinly sliced,
2 .2 pieces astragalus root
10 cup mushroom stock
2 tbsp. tamari or soy sauce
2 cups broccoli florets
½ scallions
Salt optional

Cooking Instructions

1. In large pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onions, garlic and ginger. Sauté until soft and translucent. Add the shiitakes, carrots, astragalus root, and mushroom stock. Bring to a low boil. Reduce heat and let simmer for 45 minutes.
2. Add the tamari and adjust seasoning with salt if needed. Add the broccoli florets and cook until tender, about two minutes.
3. Remove the astragalus root pieces. Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish with scallions before serving.

optional: you may add other varying herbs tailored to your need, whether as tincture, or roots. Some examples are Nettle for allergies. Burdock root, for digestion and detoxification. Echinacea and/or Cats Claw for added immunity.

For our soup we added tincture rather than the root, which proves just as beneficial. It is encouraged to work with what you have and focus consciously on the appearing affects so as to better relate to the herbs and form your own empirical evidence.

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*If you wish to broaden your herbal knowledge, please ask us
about:*

The Ginkgo Tree Herbal Education,

The Science and Art of Herbalism Course

or

Back to Your Roots Herbal Retreat, September 8, 2018

*Held annually at our farm Dogwood & Brambles,
which is designated a Botanical Sanctuary, by United Plant Savers.*

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