

Spring virus strategies...

Greetings all and the first thing I'd say is: be aware but not a-scared!

The mind is the first layer of our defenses! The science of psycho-neuro-immunology demonstrates the presence of stress hormone receptors on our white blood cells that fight infections of all sorts. If we're super stressed & worried, it literally affects our immune defenses. Listen to beautiful music, walk outside, read a great book. Trust your body's ability to protect you AND take the precautions outlined below! The rest is not under our control and therefore not useful to worry about!

Most of the things you've been reading from the CDC are useful ways to decrease the likelihood that you'll pick up the corona bug: wash hands, wipe down surfaces, avoid large crowds in close quarters and keep yourself well-rested and well-fed. Now...some naturopathic pointers on these topics and more!:

Well fed: Avoid sugar!!! Concentrated sweets, bakery items, candies, desserts... these tend to slow down the immune system response to viruses and therefore temporarily lower immunity. Keep this especially in mind for the upcoming holidays as even in a non-corona year; I see a significant boost of people getting sick after the holidays with travel stress, eating & drinking different foods and high intake of sweets. Enjoy the holidays and visiting but keep the food as basic and non-sugary as you possibly can.

Well-rested: Being sleep deprived certainly lowers our immune system's ability to be in top notch shape. Try not to deprive yourself of sleep, if you're a student or working odd hours or just have a lot on your plate, PLEASE factor in a bit more sleep time to get about 7+ hours if you can.

Steam inhalation: A very good strategy as virtually all viruses establish themselves in a cooler environment (nose, throat, eyes). There are OTC personal nebulizer gizmos to inhale steam on the web and these are a good idea at the end of a busy day or following periods of potential exposure. Twice a day if you're having a cough or other early symptoms! Be gentle with the essential oils or inhaled fragrances, these can be super strong, a little goes a LONG way!

Nutrients:

Vitamin C! Like I've stated in a couple of other issues of Frog Hollers... vitamin C is a simple yet very important nutrient to get plenty of, and you can't really get sufficient amounts from food (an orange contains about 35 mg.) I'd recommend 2,000-4,000 mg a day taken in divided doses (i.e. 1,000 mg three times a day) and if you're in a crowd, or suspicious of exposure or at **FIRST SIGN OF ANY SYMPTOMS LIKE SCRATCHY THROAT< HEADACHE< TIGHT CHEST, FEELING WARM/FEVERISH, MUSCLE ACHES...**take 5,000-7,000 mg a day. If you take too much C it can cause loose bowels. IF that happens, reduce the dose and then nudge up gradually. Also...do NOT stop taking vitamin C abruptly after you've been on a high dose for a few days, lower the dose down to the 2,000 a day gradually.

Vitamin A & D: about 5,000 IU of A and 1,000 IU of vitamin D3 per day are good to help protect the nose, throat, eyes and other mucous membranes from viral attack. If you might become pregnant, don't exceed this amount of vitamin A.

Zinc: 25 mg of zinc a day is a good way to protect the throat from viral attack. Zinc tastes pretty bad but getting it in contact with the throat is a good idea., so crush tablets or open up capsules to release the zinc powder. Prepare for the (chalky, bitter, flat) taste, but there are lozenges out there that are decent. Don't take 100's of mgs of zinc continuously as it does build up gradually in the body.

HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES: Good to have on hand: Oscilloccinum, gelsemium, bryonia, eupatorium perfoliatum, influenzinum. These are taken according to the specific indication of the remedy except for the Oscilloccinum and influenzinum which are taken at the first sign of flu-like symptoms: muscle aches, fever, headache

Herbs: Here we have a bit of a challenge. No herbs have been tested in infected humans for effectiveness against this particular virus, even other corona viruses have testing that typically involves test-tube studies rather than testing in real people in real-life situations. Much of our use of herbs for viral immune help involves ramping UP the immune system. With COVID-19 the concern is a dramatic over reaction of immunity (cytokine storm) that ends up creating the severe breathing problems that are a sign the infection is taking a nasty turn. Substances like tnf-alpha, IL-6, IL-4 are body chemicals that, in excess, are associated with an over-zealous immune activity. So... I feel that if the virus is hitting too hard, quieting down these chemicals is a reasonable strategy.

Two herbs to consider therefore are Licorice and nettle leaf. Licorice is a good anti-viral as well! Both of these are available as a tea or as a powder and thus easy to use as a tea. One caveat...too much licorice can cause high blood pressure, so if you have tendency to high BP or on medication for it, keep this in mind. Generally, a cup or two of licorice tea for a few days isn't sufficient to cause the BP to rise, but do watch it! While echinacea, elderberry and other immune boosters are generally helpful to resist infection, large amounts of these at the beginning of a nasty corona virus infection may not be the best, we simply don't know for sure. I do point out that it has been documented that echinacea can raise levels of CRP in people. The CRP is a general gauge of inflammation in the body so in this example echinacea would not be a great idea. A certain amount of inflammation is good for immune protection, but too much is what appears to cause the worst reactions to the mostly benign corona virus.

So I'd recommend herbs like elderberry, echinacea and astragalus in mild doses as a preventive, but if signs of breathing problems, real tightness in the chest and fever occur, stick to the large amounts of vitamin C, nettle leaf tea and licorice root tea and really watch closely! Be vigilant, but not paranoid, if your nose itches, use your elbow!

In the office, we will be using a super effective anti-viral disinfectant on the door handles, tables and chair surfaces. For the time being, kids toys and books will be absent from the office as well. Things will be a bit Spartan, but easier to knock off any stray bugs!

Best to you all, spring is coming! no worries!!
JHF