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To: Dr. David Taylor

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Keep Your Immune System Working Right



General cold and flu symptoms include malaise, loss of appetite, physical and mental fatigue, and aches and pains. The scientific term for these symptoms is the *acute phase response*, which is caused when the immune system actively releases excess amounts of certain inflammatory chemicals called cytokines, the most well-known of which are interleukin-1 (IL-1), interleukin-6 (IL-6), and tumor necrosis factor (TNF).

With this in mind, consider a time when you were psychologically stressed by an event or series of events and you developed cold/flu symptoms - the acute phase response. What appears to happen is that psychologically stressful situations themselves activate the immune system in a similar fashion as viruses; inflammatory cytokines are produced in excess, which causes an acute phase response that we misinterpret as "catching a cold virus."

Researchers have also uncovered that there is interplay between diet, psychological stressors, and pro-inflammatory immune activation. Stressful events such as taking a difficult academic oral examination lead to an increase in immune activity. The pro-inflammatory acute phase response appears to be greater in students with elevated blood levels of pro-inflammatory omega-6 fatty acids and with low blood levels of anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids.

An additional dietary factor that promotes inflammation is overeating. We typically view

overeating as merely a means by which we put on additional body fat; however, it turns out that immediately after overeating, we create a pro-inflammatory immune response that includes the excess production of the same cytokines that cause the acute phase response.

It should not be a surprise that key supplements are those that reduce inflammation and thus, help to reduce the chemistry associated with an acute phase response. Here are a few examples:

- *Vitamin C* has anti-inflammatory functions and thus can support a healthy immune response.
- *Many spices*: Not surprisingly, most spices have multiple anti-inflammatory mechanisms of action, which is likely why they offer some immune-supportive benefits.
- *Magnesium*: Intravenous magnesium has been shown to alleviate symptoms in acute and chronic asthma. Most Americans are known to be deficient in magnesium, which may contribute to the expression of a host of diseases.
- *Probiotics* are supplemental bacteria that are beneficial to the gastrointestinal system. Research has demonstrated that probiotics reduce intestinal and overall body inflammation and support a healthy immune response.
- *Vitamin D*: Adequate vitamin D levels are needed to help the body make a natural antibiotic called cathelicidin. In one study, subjects who took 2,000 IU of vitamin D per day for one year virtually eliminated self-reported incidence of colds and flu.

So when considering the immune system and nutrition, the focus should be on avoiding the foods that promote inflammation and focusing on the foods that reduce inflammation. The best supplements to support a healthy immune response include fish oil, vitamin C, herbs like ginger and garlic, magnesium, probiotics and vitamin D. Always talk to your doctor before taking any supplement for the first time, particularly if you have a pre-existing health condition or are currently taking prescription medication.

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[Do's and Don'ts of a Wellness Pregnancy](#)

While having a baby is the most natural thing in the world, what used to be a simple process is now complicated by products and services, options and choices. Before you make what are some of the most important decisions of your life, make sure to gather all the information you can. Here's a good starting point for a conversation you should have with yourself, your significant other and your doctor(s): some of the pregnancy do's and don'ts.



DON'T get overscheduled: Stress can have a negative impact on your pregnancy, causing health problems such as hypertension, and may potentially cause a miscarriage. It's important to

look at your life realistically and not get overscheduled. Spreading yourself too thin during these important nine months won't just negatively affect you, but your unborn child as well.

DON'T be sedentary: What's a sedentary lifestyle? If you aren't active for a sustained 20 minutes at least three days a week, you're living it, which may lead to weight gain. Excessive weight gain during pregnancy has been linked to labor difficulties and gestational diabetes. If you're typically a person who doesn't move a lot, now is the time to change. Consistent (safe) movement is so important for you and your developing baby.

DON'T forget the importance of good nutrition: Diet plays an important role during pregnancy. Eating whole, living foods begins by understanding that if it's in a box, a can or package, there's a good chance it's been nutritionally compromised. Processed foods are generally less healthy and have already had most, if not all, of their important vitamins and minerals processed out of them. Remember, without sound, complete nutrition, you and your developing baby will suffer.

DO reduce your caffeine intake: Research suggests caffeine can cause miscarriages if you're already pregnant and, if you're not already pregnant, can interfere with conception.

DON'T get a "routine" ultrasound: The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that ultrasound examinations only be performed for specific reasons, but many health care professionals include at least one ultrasound at 18-20 weeks as part of their routine prenatal care. Since there haven't been any documented negative effects, it's considered safe. The problem is, just because the effects aren't documented doesn't mean they don't exist. Even the Food and Drug Administration says, "While ultrasound has been around for many years, expectant women and their families need to know that the long-term effects of repeated ultrasound exposures on the fetus are not fully known."

DO rely on your family wellness chiropractor: Many think a chiropractor only treats back and neck pain, but many more women have discovered the benefits chiropractors can provide in terms of prenatal care. Preconception and prenatal chiropractic care for you can mean less morning sickness, less lower back pain and a shorter, more quality labor and delivery. More than that, chiropractic care supports the integrity of your pelvic function, which includes the uterus, the associated muscles and ligaments, and the interfacing of the nervous and hormonal systems, which is important for you and your baby.

DO recognize your right to make decisions: When all is said and done, remember that this is your pregnancy and your baby, and you have the right to ask questions and get second opinions when you are unsure about anything. You are in control and should make your decisions based on the information provided by those you trust. Remember that at every turn, you control what you allow during your pregnancy and delivery, and that at any time it is OK to say, "No," and expect your decisions to be honored. This is not about choosing to ignore medical advice and put you or your baby at risk; it's about making decisions in conjunction with your health care team to have a safe, natural pregnancy.

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The Essential 20-Minute Workout



Whether you are exercising to get in shape or you train to stay in shape, it's all about contracting your muscles so your body will add muscle. The more lean muscle you have, the more calories you burn. The ideal fat-burning routine involves high-intensity exercise (80 percent of maximum) for 20 minutes at a time. Here are a few routines to get you started.

Routine 1

Squat: Start with feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing out only slightly. Take a deep breath and squat down. Pretend you are moving the hips backward to sit in a chair. Feel the body weight pressing down through both heels. Lower yourself to a knee bend where the thighs are parallel to the floor (at least 90 degrees). At the bottom, think "butt" and activate the gluteal muscles to help return to the start position while breathing out - this helps support the spine. Start with body weight only, performing 8 repetitions; progress to using a dowel or light bar across the chest. This can be progressed by holding dumbbells or a kettlebell in one hand or both hands. *Aim to increase the weight you can lift for 8 reps.*

Pull-ups: Hang from a chin-up bar with an underhand grip, your hands spaced about shoulder-width apart and arms straight. Pull yourself up as you keep your elbows pointing down, and then slowly drop to the starting position. Make sure your chin goes above the bar on each repetition. If you can't even do one, be persistent; eventually you will be able to. *Try to build to 5 reps.*

Push-ups: Standard push-ups: Get in a push-up position with your hands about shoulder-width apart. Bend at the elbows while keeping your back straight, until your chin almost touches the floor, then push back up. Do 6 reps. Once you've got this down, progress to stability ball push-ups. This takes your push-ups to the next level - doing them with your feet on a stability ball. Keep your body straight; don't let your hips sag or stick your butt up in the air. This has core-strengthening benefits and arm benefits. *Do as many as you can with strict form.*

Routine 2

Stability ball hammy: Perform this exercise with the soles of your feet on a stability ball and your back on the floor. Start with the whole back on the floor, knees slightly bent, with legs up on the ball. Push down through the feet into the ball, pushing the hips up at the same time. Lift hips until there is a straight line through the knee, hip and shoulder, keeping upper back and neck on the floor. Lower your hips to an inch off the ground, then repeat. *Start with 8 reps with two feet on the ball and build to 15 reps as you get stronger.*

Overhead shoulder press: Begin to perform with a band with handles, progress to a pair of dumbbells, then progress to a kettlebell. When using the band, stand on the band with both feet with a handle in each hand. Stand with good posture, holding the handles at your side, palms facing sides, raise the arms to shoulder height, then raise the arms overhead. Keep the elbows stiff. The finish position is with the hands above the head, palms facing forward. Retain good posture, without using the trunk or rotating the body during the movement, and finish with shoulders wide and relaxed. *Start with 8 reps, aiming to increase the weight lifted but continuing with 8 reps. If you are using the kettlebell, you can press one arm at a time and then switch sides.*

Mountain climbers: Kneel on all fours, your hands in line with but slightly wider than your shoulders. Straighten your left leg completely and lift your right knee toward your chest. You should be on the balls of your feet, positioned like a sprinter in the starting blocks. *Now quickly switch leg positions as many times as you can for 30 to 45 seconds.*

Standing triceps extensions: Standing in good posture, do not arch the back. Hold one dumbbell in both hands behind the head. Raise the forearms and lock out the elbows. Lower the forearms. *Start with 8 reps, aiming to increase the weight lifted but continuing with 8 reps.*

Talk to your doctor about different exercise routines to keep your body challenged and making progress, whatever your goal is: more lean muscle, less body fat, better cardiovascular health, etc.

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