

WITH THE HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES, YEAR-END PROJECTS, EXAMS AND TRAVELS NOW BEHIND US, YOU WOULD EXPECT TO FEEL REFRESHED AND RECHARGED. FOR MANY PEOPLE THOUGH, AS SOON AS THE STRESS OF THE SEASON IS OVER AND THE PRESSURE IS OFF, THEY FALL ILL.

By Bernadette Abraham

THERE COULD BE A NUMBER OF REASONS FOR THIS, SUCH AS INCREASED TRAVEL AND EXPOSURE TO GERMS AND BACTERIA, WEATHER CHANGES, SEASONAL ALLERGIES, AND EVEN WHAT IS KNOWN AS "LEISURE SICKNESS", a phrase first coined by a psychologist in the Netherlands who attributes stress as the main cause.

Leisure sickness is a phenomenon that usually happens after high stress periods when the body was running high on adrenaline for some time. Cortisol is a natural hormone that responds to stress, lowers immunity, and makes you more susceptible to illness once you do finally switch off.

Regardless of the cause, the primary reason for getting sick is an impaired immune system, so a healthy lifestyle is important to help prevent the common cold and flu.

Regular exercise, frequent sun exposure, enough quality sleep, clean filtered water, frequent hand washing, and a diet free from sugar, artificial sweeteners, and processed grains are some of the healthy lifestyle habits that can help prevent colds and illnesses.

But what to do if you're already sick and run down by stress? For starters, avoid processed sugar! One teaspoon of sugar has been shown to suppress the immune system by several hours. Also make sure you stay well hydrated, get enough rest, and give your body nourishing foods to help boost your immunity.

# Natural ways TO FIGHT THE COMMON COLD

Here are some powerful ingredients and natural remedies that can help. Just be sure to check with your doctor if you're taking any medications or have any concerns:

## LEMON, GINGER AND MANUKA HONEY TEA

\* Lemon alkalizes the body, ginger is anti-inflammatory, and honey is anti-bacterial. This is the perfect choice for a quick cough and cold remedy. Make sure your honey is organic and raw; not processed with added sugar.

## GINSENG

\* Ginseng can help cure a cold or the flu, as well as prevent future colds if taken as a daily supplement.

## OREGANO OIL

\* Oregano oil is anti-microbial. The higher the concentration of the anti-microbial agent carvacrol, the more effective it is.

## GARLIC

\* Garlic is a triple threat. It is anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal and works like a broad-spectrum antibiotic. It is best eaten crushed and raw, either by the spoon, in a vegetable juice or salad dressing. Garlic, lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil make a delicious Mediterranean dressing.

## FERMENTED FOODS

\* Fermented foods are high in probiotics (i.e. good bacteria), which help support your immune system. Natural probiotics include raw kefir, kimchee, miso, pickles,

sauerkraut, etc. A good quality probiotic supplement can also be beneficial.

## ZINC

\* Zinc has been shown to decrease the duration and severity of a cold when taken on the first day when cold symptoms appear.

## ELDERBERRY

\* Elderberries contain a lot of bioflavonoids, which significantly boost the immune system. It can help soothe a sore throat, relieve congestion, and is also known for inducing sweating. It is easy to make your own syrup by boiling, then simmering a half-cup of elderberries with two to three cups of water for 30 minutes. Crush and strain your elderberry mixture. Once cool, add a cup of honey and store it in the fridge for several months. The syrup can be taken alone or in tea.

## POWERFUL HERBS AND SPICES

\* Cinnamon, sumac, turmeric, and oregano all have high anti-oxidant levels and can be used generously in food. Here are two of my favorite recipes to help fight the common cold and cough:

## GINGER, LEMON, TURMERIC, HONEY JUICE

\* Juice together fresh ginger, turmeric and lemon. Add coconut water, honey and organic vanilla for added flavor. Curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric is anti-inflammatory and is recognized for its anti-cancer properties.

Coconut water is loaded with electrolytes to help keep you well hydrated. Combined with the anti-inflammatory properties of ginger and the anti-microbial properties of honey, you've got yourself one powerful juice!

## HOMEMADE HONEY LEMON COUGH SYRUP (Recipe and dosage by organic consumers association)

### DIRECTIONS

1. Put a pint of honey (approx. 1.5 lbs or 680g) in a pot on the stove on low heat. *Note: Do not boil honey as it changes its medicinal properties.*
2. In a separate pot, boil a whole lemon for 2 to 3 minutes to soften the lemon and kill any bacteria that may be on the lemon skin. Let the lemon cool enough to handle, then cut into slices. Add it to the pot of honey on the stove. Let mixture cook on warm heat for about an hour.
3. Strain the lemon from the honey making sure all lemon seeds are removed. Let cool, then bottle in a jar with a lid and store in the refrigerator. This syrup will keep for 2 months in the refrigerator.

To soothe a cough, take ½ teaspoon for a 25 lb. child (~11kg) and one teaspoon for a 50 lb. child (~23kg), about four times a day or as often as needed. Adults can take one tablespoon doses.



Check out fitness expert, Bernadette Abraham's flu and cold recipes and make sure your 2014 is snuffle-free!

