



# **Common Respiratory Ailments: Part 1: The Best Offense is a Good Defense**

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With the rampant reports of Salmonella in our peanut butter, E. Coli in our fast food, methicillin resistant staph aureus (MRSA) ready to pounce on any opened wound, a pending pandemic of avian flu, and a transglobal collection of viruses and bacteria ready to invade our every breath, why wouldn't we want to build our immunity?!

Current medical therapy focuses on the treatment of disease, whereas natural healing systems focus on treating the person and preventing the disease. Every traditional healing system has remedies aimed at improving resistance to infection, whereas our current Western medical approach focuses only on the treatment of an established infection. Which is why Integrative Medicine provides the best approach for both the prevention and treatment of common respiratory ailments.

Let us focus on the Big 3 of health and wellness: stress reduction, exercise and nutrition. Multiple studies over the years have documented a direct and linear correlation with a person's perceived level of stress and their subsequent risk of infection. The daily practice of meditation or just spending time in silence provides anyone with a heartier resistance. Yet another side-benefit to self-awareness. Other ways to reduce stress include making friends (paradoxically people with more social contacts have fewer infections), taking evenings off, taking weekends off, regular "power naps" (of 15-30 minutes), regular vacations, regular deep breathing exercises all can improve the stressful lifestyle which leads to infections. I tell my patients that "catching a cold" is often the way the body asks for a respite.

Regular daily exercise of a minimum of 1/2 hour per day of continuously aerobic activity provides increased immunity and studies indicate that exercisers get significantly fewer infections. Over-training, as for marathons, is associated with an increased risk of infections. All forms of exercise including stretching such as yoga and resistance training provide unique health benefits.

White flour, white sugar, and hydrogenated oils kill. Avoid all forms of liquid calories and drinks with artificial sweeteners. The staggering evidence on the hundreds of thousands of deaths per year caused by cancer, heart disease, and increased diabetes and risk for infection due solely to these substances makes one wonder how any human organism can fend off these many invisible "terrorists." Giving your body these foods and expecting it to fend off these bugs is like sending the best army in the world into a foreign country and not giving it any armor. The results are predictable. Provide your body with the right "ammunition" and you will be surprised to find out that it could do the job necessary all along if only given the right support.

Simple natural remedies aimed at improving your immunity may sometimes still be necessary, especially if you cannot lead a lifestyle conducive to good immunity, have existing medical illnesses and/or take medicines that may further hinder your health. Also, if you just tend to be prone towards sinus or bronchial infections, you might wish to consider the following advice to further help support your body.

1. Take a good multi-vitamin (such as Life Force Multiple – Source Naturals). Just a multi-vitamin has been shown in several studies to improve resistance to infection, especially in diabetics.
2. Take a Probiotic (good bacteria) - Especially if you have taken antibiotics within the past year, suffered from a diarrheal illness, traveled or suffer from recurring infections. A great way to build your ecosystem, which helps prevent infection, is by adding friendly bacteria. A dosage of between 15-50 billion organisms per day for a minimum of two weeks is necessary. Good brands include Culturelle, Florastor, I-Flora and others, but avoid supplements that don't offer organism count. This is one area where I would always buy a name brand.
3. Experiment with immune supporting herbs – find a health store you can trust to help distinguish between herbs for prevention and herbs for treatment. Combinations such as “Astragalus Jade Screen” by Planetary Herbals are good examples of healthy preventive herbal combinations. Most of even the best preventive herbals recommend also taking a probiotic and considering digestive enzymes with meals to help aid digestion.
4. Intravenous Nutrition - If you have had significant troubles with your immune system, I would strongly consider intravenous nutrition as an option as levels of certain nutrients such as vitamin C cannot be reached adequately by just using the oral route.

In our [next article](#) we will discuss the treatment of common respiratory ailments.

Your Journey to Health and Healing,  
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References:  
Upon Request

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