



Blackbird Clinic PLLC

Fall/Winter 2008 Newsletter

Flu Season : Prevention

If you are getting sick every winter, this may be an early warning sign. Rather than guess about your health, schedule a nutritional medicine consultation to address your individual needs.

Dr. Andrea Black, Board Certified Naturopathic Physician, is director of Blackbird Clinic PLLC in Okanogan, which specializes in naturopathic and nutritional medicine:

- ✓ *For all ages and a variety of health conditions*
- ✓ *Addressing the underlying causes of disease*
- ✓ *Using a holistic approach*
- ✓ *Safe and effective natural therapies*

*For more information or to make an appointment for a consultation, please contact us at:
(509)422-3700*

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No one likes to get the flu. But, is the flu vaccine the answer? We know that regardless of whether or not you get the flu shot, you can still come down with the flu. Even with all of the marketing and scare tactics we see on TV, radio and magazine ads about the need to get the flu vaccine, only 1/3 of the US population actually gets the flu shot. If the flu vaccine is as effective as the CDC wants us to believe, why don't more people get the flu shot?

First of all, many question the effectiveness of the flu vaccine. There is no single virus that causes the flu; there is no one flu vaccine that protects against all of them. The flu shot is only as good as the educated guesses of a group of vaccine researchers across the globe. Every February, they try to predict which flu viruses will work their evil during the next fall and winter. Their three top choices are put into the vaccine. If the flu vaccine happens to be on-target, there's the potential for it to be more effective but it's really dependent upon the health of your immune system. Even then, the vaccine isn't perfect because virus' mutate. Even in the best case scenario, it won't always protect against the flu.

A severe cold can mimic the flu. There are more than 200 cold viruses, they mutate a lot, and virtually everyone comes down with one from time to time. Although the worst colds might feel like the flu, lots of people say they have the flu when they really don't. Two years ago, only 13% of people who were tested after reporting flu-like illnesses actually had the real thing.

According to the CDC, "*On average, 226,000 people are hospitalized every year because of influenza and 36,000 die – mostly elderly.*". Of those who are hospitalized or die because of flu complications, how many of these have preexisting health conditions? If you have a preexisting health condition, your immune system will be more weak and unable to mount a strong attack against the flu virus. A healthy immune system is the most important aspect of protecting yourself from flu complications. In a study published in *Vaccine* May 2007, 80 case-patients were identified as having been hospitalized for complications from influenza in eastern Thailand. Of those 80 cases, those less than 1 year old were 6.2 times more likely to have complications and those over 75 years of age were 11.1 times more likely to have complications compared with the overall population. The complicated cases were also 7.6 times more likely to have chronic respiratory disease. In Thailand, the young, elderly, and those with chronic disease were at a higher risk for hospitalization from complications from influenza. In other words, generally healthy people may not need a flu vaccine.

Only small populations and short-term trials are used to measure safety of the flu vaccines. Adverse-events reporting, for instance, is done for only 2 to 14 days after an injection and it's voluntary. According to Hugh Fudenberg, MD, one of the world's leading immunogeneticists, "if an individual has had five consecutive flu shots between 1970 and 1980 (the years studied), his/her chances of getting Alzheimer's disease is 10 times higher than if they had one, two or no shots". Alzheimer's is now the 7th leading cause of death in the United States.

Immune Support Breakfast*

The following recipe is not designed to be hypoallergenic and must be modified for your personal dietary profile.

4 cups rolled grains (oats, barley, spelt)
2 cups oat bran
1 cup unsweetened dried fruit
1 cup raw sunflower seeds (ground)
1 cup raw, unsalted pecans or walnuts (chopped)
1 cup lecithin granules
1 cup flaxseed (freshly ground)

Mix all ingredients well and store in refrigerator. For each serving, soak ½ cup dry mixture at least 30 minutes (overnight is okay) in soymilk, nut milk, rice milk, diluted fruit juice or water. To increase protein value, eat with yoghurt or whey protein.

* High in fiber, omega 3 oils, and 100% whole grains



Immune Booster Ginger Soup*

6 cups water
3 Tbs. chopped ginger root
10 chopped scallions
1 brick tofu, cubed
3 cups bean sprouts *or*
chopped greens (kale, spinach, chard, parsley)
3 Tbs. tamari *or* miso paste
¼-½ tsp. red pepper (vary to taste)
1 tsp. paprika
1 head garlic, peeled and chopped
Juice of one lemon

Sauté scallions and vegetables in olive oil. Add spices, water, and remaining ingredients. Simmer for 15-20 minutes.

*Antiviral and high in minerals

In an article published in *Expert Review of Vaccines* August 2008, authors state, "In 2005, Fluarix (an inactivated flu vaccine) underwent accelerated approval for use in adults by the US FDA following one US-based, randomized, placebo- controlled trial that established its safety in adults". The authors went on to say, "There are no published clinical trials evaluating the effectiveness or efficacy of Fluarix against influenza and its complications".

With regards to the flu vaccine, a healthy population may not necessarily need it. There are often **safer and more effective ways to prevent colds and flu.**

Factors that can contribute to recurrent colds and flu and reduce immunities include poor nutrition, i.e. "SAD" (Standard American Diet), inadequate protein, deficiency of specific minerals and vitamins, poor weight management and obesity, and poor hygiene (i.e. inadequate handwashing).

Impaired immunity can be enhanced by vitamins and minerals, botanical medicines, an immune enhancing diet, exercise and stress management. Numerous botanical medicines, such as elderberry, echinacea, and garlic, enhance the immune system, are anti-viral, and have been used for influenza prevention. Zinc, selenium, iron, B-6, folic acid and vitamins A, C, D, and E have important influences on immune responses.

Immune Boosters: Prevention of colds and flu's (adults)

Avoid:

- sugar
- all dairy, during active symptoms

Assure adequate:

- sleep (7-9 hours/night)
- water (1qt water per 50 lbs body weight/day)
- exercise (minimum of 3 x/week for 30 min)

Nutritional medicines (taken with food):

- Multivitamin/mineral: daily-research has shown it can decrease overall illness, including infection, especially for seniors
- Vitamin A: 10,000-20,000iu/day (if pregnant, check with doctor first)
- Zinc: 30mg/day (picolinate or citrate)during active symptoms
- Vitamin C: 1,000mg 2x/day (limit to 1,000mg/day if history of calcium oxylate kidney stones)
- Vitamin D₃: 1,000-2,000iu/day. Have Vit D blood levels checked.

Botanical medicines (taken in divided doses):

- Garlic: 1 clove daily, or garlic supplement with ≥ 10mg allicin. Raw fresh garlic has antiviral, antibacterial, and antifungal properties.
- Echinacea: 300-600mg daily, standardized to contain 3.5% echinacosides—during active symptoms
- Astragalus: 4-6g daily of dried astragalus root—during active symptoms
- Elderberry: 10ml liquid extract daily

For **children** (40-100 lbs. body weight): take ¼-½ adult doses, depending on body weight.

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