

21 nutraceuticals that can boost your immune response (part two)



Last week, I offered you the first half of my recommendations for bolstering your immune system. (If you missed it, you can read it [here](#).) This week, we're wrapping up with ten more nutraceuticals that can help you stay healthy during this important time of year!

Without further ado:

12) Echinacea: Perhaps the most widely used Western herb for immune-enhancement, echinacea compounds have been found to boost production of immune chemicals that stimulate macrophages, the white blood cells that track down and engulf microbial invaders. Controversy persists over its role in protection against colds and flu; detractors are accused of invoking poorly-designed studies to challenge its efficacy.

13) Astragalus: A traditional Chinese herb used for viral infections, astragalus has proven in studies to be effective in preventing and shortening the duration and intensity of common colds. Astragalus has also been proposed as an antidote to the immunosuppressive effects of chemotherapy and radiation.

14) DHA: Once thought to have a negative effect on immunity, omega-3 fatty acids have been newly embraced for immune support. Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), in particular, has been shown to enhance the production of infection-fighting antibodies and cytokines.

15) Colostrum/Transfer Factor: The "first milk," critical for priming immunity in newborns, has found application to provide immune support in adults. Used extensively in agriculture to safeguard young livestock, bovine-derived colostrum and transfer factor can help reinforce human defenses.

16) Thymic Extracts: The thymus is a crucial organ that coordinates immune response. Helper T-cells and natural killer cells originate from the thymus. Peptides derived from the thymus such as Proboost have long been used to promote resistance.

17) Ginseng: In China, ginseng is a favorite gift of children to their elderly parents, especially when winter flu and cold season looms. Panax ginseng bolsters immunity in a variety of ways. Evidence supports its use against both infectious diseases and cancer.

18) Mushrooms: Research on the immune-boosting properties of mushroom abounds. Species associated with these benefits include Shiitake, Reishi, Chaga, Cordyceps, Coriolus and Lion's Mane. Listen to a great primer on the health properties of

mushrooms here.

19) Xylitol: Biofilms in the nasal passages provide a culture medium for respiratory disease pathogens. Products like XLEAR nasal spray may prevent bacterial colonization.

20) Essential Oils: Oregano, rosemary and thyme contain volatile oils like carvacrol, rosmarinic acid and thymol that possess strong antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral properties.

21) Elderberry: Studies have shown that a proprietary formulation of elderberry extract sold under the name Sambucol® has shown an ability to fight flu symptoms. It may also shorten the duration and severity of colds.

I hope this list helps you safeguard yourself and your loved ones against illness this year. As always, I want to reiterate that it is important to take these supplements in the right amounts, based on your individual needs, in consultation with your trusted medical/nutritional professional.

Don't forget that adequate sleep, healthy diet, avoidance of excess alcohol, and moderate exercise are important bulwarks against communicable illnesses.

I also want to remind all my readers that one of the best ways to avoid infection is simple hygiene – be sure to wash your hands regularly, especially before touching your eyes, nose and mouth. If you're already sick, regular hand washing can help prevent the spread of your illness to others, as can staying home as much as possible until you're well. Stay tuned to Intelligent Medicine for more tips for staying healthy and for more information on emerging infectious threats.