



Special INFLUENZA Issue

Brought to you by Sensible-Alternative Naturopathic Clinic

Appointments are available weekdays 8am to 8pm. Berry Rd Medical Centre, St Leonards.

Call: 02 9438 3448

Do not use Panadol unless absolutely necessary.

Paracetamol reduces the antioxidant capacity in the lung, and regular use increases the risk for asthma and other lung problems. (1)

Paracetamol and aspirin increase duration of influenza

Research from the American College of Clinical Pharmacy confirms what every Naturopath knows. Suppressing your fever also suppresses your immune system. The duration of illness averaged one full day longer when you use drugs for your fever. (2)

If your pain or fever is so severe that you cannot rest or get well, then by all means, take a paracetamol. In many cases, however, there are other options that will still make you feel better, but will actually support what your body is trying to do.



Phone consultations for colds and flu

If you are an existing patient, and you need individual advice for cold and flu or secondary infections, give us a call. Lara or Suzie can recommend products for purchase at your local dispensary. Fee is \$35, payable by credit card. Health fund rebates. **9438 3448**

How to beat colds and flu

The best protection is your own immune system, both for prevention and to fight a virus once you have it. At the first sign of infection:

- **Rest** and get 8 hours sleep
- **Do not suppress fever** – your immune system uses the fever to kill the virus. If you are able to rest without drugs, avoid paracetamol and let your immune do its job.
- **Avoid refined sugar** – it suppresses immune function
- **Avoid cow's milk** - the casein is mucus-forming,
- **Eat lightly** – food in the intestine is a burden for the immune system
- Eat **chicken soup** – the broth contains the amino acid cysteine, which thins mucus
- **Vitamin A capsules** – supports immune function and reduces mucous (see side panel). Consult your Naturopath.
- **Zinc** – supports immune function. Take 20mg per day.
- **Vitamin C** with bioflavonoids – supports immune function
- Homoeopathic flu products such as **Oscillococcinum**
- **Echinacea** – stimulates immune function
- **Andrographis** – stimulates immune function
- **Raw garlic** – stimulates immune function
- **Ginger and honey** – make a hot drink with fresh ginger to soothe your sore throat.
- **Warming sock treatment** (see side panel)
- **Goldenseal** – antibiotic for secondary sinus and lung

Warming sock treatment

This is an old Naturopathic treatment. It stimulates immune function and reduces mucous congestion. It must be done RIGHT before you go to bed. Don't walk around with the socks on, or you will get chilled.

1. Hot bath or foot bath (your feet should be pink)
2. Thin layer of damp (wrung-out) cotton socks
3. Thick, DRY wool socks over top
4. Go STRAIGHT to bed

When you wake up, your feet will be warm and dry and you will feel much better (my guarantee).

Flu vaccine is probably not the solution

A 2005 study in the Archives of Internal Medicine found that flu vaccines do NOT reduce the risk of death from influenza for people over 65. Previous studies with more positive results are believed to be biased because they included mortality statistics from the very ill, who were not eligible for vaccine. (3)

A 2003 study by the American Center for Disease Control and Prevention made a similar finding. A survey of 3100 health workers found that the flu vaccine protected between ZERO and 14% of those vaccinated. (4)

Vaccinations are a complex (and controversial) topic. I will not go into the entire issue here, but consider these facts:

- Flu vaccines sales are big business, and are expected to reach US\$2 billion annual sales by 2006. (Total vaccine sales are US\$10 billion)
- Vaccines, including the flu vaccine, contain formaldehyde and thimerosal, a mercury compound
- Members of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS) voted in 2000 for a moratorium on government mandated vaccines (5)

References:

- (1) McKeever, TM et al. The Association of Acetaminophen, Aspirin, and Ibuprofen with Respiratory Disease and Lung Function. Amer J Resp&Critical Care Medicine 171: 966-971. 2005
- (2) Plaisance KI et al. Effect of antipyretic therapy on the duration of illness in experimental influenza A, Shigella sonnei, and Rickettsia rickettsii infections. Pharmacotherapy 20(12):1417-22. 2000
- (3) Simonsen, L et al. Impact of Influenza Vaccination on Seasonal Mortality in the US Elderly Population. Arch Intern Med.165:265-272. 2005
- (4) Preliminary Assessment of the Effectiveness of the 2003--04 Inactivated Influenza Vaccine --- Colorado, December 2003. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Weekly. Jan 16, 2004 53(01);8-11
- (5) Doctor's group votes to oppose vaccine mandates. Association of American Physicians and Surgeons. Press Release Nov 2, 2000.
- (6) Ross AC et al.. Vitamin A and retinoids in antiviral responses. 1996. The FASEB Journal, Vol 10, 979-985
- (7) Vitamin A deficiency. Unicef statistics 2001. www.childinfo.org
- (8) Hartmann S et al. Exposure to Retinyl Esters, and Retinoic Acids in Non-Pregnant Women following Increasing Single and Oral Doses of Vitamin A.. Ann Nutr Metab. 2005. 49(3): 155-164.

Vitamin A is anti-viral

Vitamin A was called the "anti-infective vitamin" when it was first discovered in the 1930's. Vitamin A has been shown to decrease the susceptibility of tissue to infection, especially viral infection (6). It also decreases the production of mucus.

It is so important for viral infection, especially childhood measles, that UNICEF and the World Health Organization began a vitamin A supplementation program in 1993. Two high dose supplements per year were enough to decrease childhood mortality by 25% (7).

Many people do not know to use Vitamin A during a virus, and many Australians, in particular, avoid it because of an exaggerated concern about its safety.

Vitamin A safer than you think:

Researchers at Roche Vitamins in Switzerland gave non-pregnant women 30,000 IU of Vitamin A per day for 3 weeks. No toxicity was observed. Because blood levels in the study remained less than what has been shown to be safe for pregnant women, the researchers believe that doses higher than 30,000 are safe (8) (although not recommended).

Comment: *I am surprised by the level of concern about vitamin A in Australia. The natural vitamin does have some toxicity, but most of the concern about safety is based on adverse effects from synthetic vitamin A analogues such as acne drugs, not on natural vitamin A.*

Because Vitamin A is avoided as a supplement, we are missing out on a nutrient that is essential for healthy reproduction and immunity.

*A cod liver oil capsule contains 3000 IU of vitamin A, which is nearly 10x **less** than the amount used in the Roche study. Good food sources are egg yolks, fish and organ meats. An egg yolk contains about 250 IU.*

Non-pregnant people should consider supplements if they suffer from low immunity or reproductive problems. They can use 10,000 IU per day during acute influenza.

Pregnant women should not exceed 8000 IU, but they can use 3000 IU (1 cod liver oil capsule) during acute influenza.

All articles written by Lara Grinevitch BSc, ND
Obtain back issues, or subscribe to the latest issue of
Sensible News straight to your email.

Visit our website: www.sensible-alternative.com.au