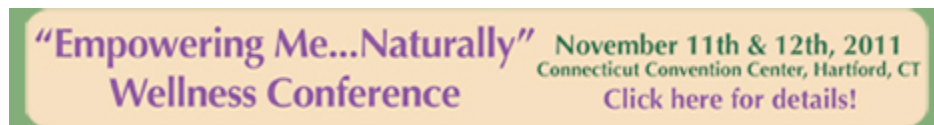


[CT Natural Health - Connecticut Holistic Health - Natural Nutmeg Magazine](#)

Connecticut's Resource for Living Naturally

[User Log in](#) [Subscribe to Posts](#)[Subscribe to Comments](#)



- [Home](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Natural Nutmeg Magazine](#)
 - [Distribution](#)
 - [Back Issues](#)
- [Advertise](#)
 - [Resource Guide](#)
 - [Media Kit](#)
- [Natural Nutmeg E-Zine](#)
 - [Dr. Di's Corner](#)
 - [Articles](#)
- [Blog](#)
 - [Archive](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Categories](#)
 - [Complementary and Alternative Medicine \(CAM\)](#)
 - [Diet](#)
 - [Recipes](#)
 - [Dr. Di's Corner](#)
 - [Emotional Well-being](#)
 - [Exercise](#)
 - [Featured Articles](#)
 - [Ezine](#)
 - [Health](#)
 - [Children](#)
 - [Skin Care](#)
 - [New This Month](#)
 - [Self-care](#)
 - [Spirituality](#)
 - [Uncategorized](#)
 - [Videos](#)
 - [Weight Loss](#)

You are here: [Home](#) / Search for "head trauma osteopath"

[Keeping Your Immune System Healthy – by Dr. David Johnston](#)

Posted by [admin](#) on November 1, 2010 · [Leave a Comment](#)

Trying to keep your immune system healthy can be a daunting task these days. We are assaulted on a daily basis by foreign invaders entering our bodies. Breathing air, eating food, and drinking water are basic activities we all need to do for survival. However, unseen to us are the microscopic viruses, bacteria, toxins, and chemicals which build up in our bodies over time as we conduct our basic living. Research now shows that the average baby even before birth has over 200 chemicals in its little body because of the mother's exposure to toxins in the environment!

Short of living in a bubble, what can we do to keep ourselves healthy in the toxic world in which we live? Following are some ideas for keeping your immune system strong, so your body can function at its best.

The Immune System

The immune system consists of many types of proteins, cells, organs, and tissues interacting in an elaborate, dynamic network. The human immune system adapts over time—for better or worse.

The primary function of a healthy, balanced immune system is to:

- Identify potentially infectious or injurious substances
- Distinguish self-antigens (non- threatening) from foreign antigens (threatening)
- Assess the potential level of threat posed by infections, toxins or foreign antigens
- Mount a response is appropriate to the level of the threat
- Repair any damage that ensues from adversarial encounters

Disorders of the immune system can result in disease including autoimmune diseases, inflammatory diseases, and cancer.

Immunodeficiency diseases occur when the immune system is less active than normal, resulting in recurring and life threatening infections. This can be the result of a genetic disease, an infection such as acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), or can be produced by pharmaceuticals.

In contrast, ***autoimmune diseases*** result from a hyperactive immune system attacking normal tissues as if they were foreign organisms. Common autoimmune diseases include Hashimoto's Thyroiditis, Rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes mellitus type I, and Lupus.

Nutrition and the Immune System

Proper diet and nutrients are vital to maintaining a healthy immune system. The worse our diet, the more susceptible we are to infection, tumors, and immune dysfunction.

Studies over the last 30 years support the connection between vitamin/mineral balance and immunity, resistance to infection, and allergy. Low levels of vitamins A, C, E, and B6, Copper, Iron and Zinc are the most consistent nutrients linked to immune dysfunction.

Several herbs have been shown to enhance and strengthen the immune system, such as echinacea, grape seed-skin extract, goldenseal, elderberry, astragalus, and ginseng.

Omega-3 fatty acids are lacking in many modern diets and are vital to the health of cell membranes. They are helpful in preventing inflammation associated with autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and prevention of abnormal blood clots that may lead to stroke. Sources rich in Omega-3

fatty acids include: fish oil, perilla oil, borage oil, and evening primrose oil.

Probiotics serve a variety of functions in the gastrointestinal tract. They protect against the unwanted establishment of pathogens and they produce antimicrobial substances. By competing for available nutrients, these beneficial bacteria can inhibit the growth of other less favorable flora. Also by competing for adhesion sites in the gut mucosa, they displace harmful bacteria. Probiotics are essential to individuals who take antibiotics. Antibiotics can wipe out “good” as well as “bad” bacteria, leading to complications such as yeast infections, mal-digestion, constipation or diarrhea, and nausea.

>>> Nutrition Tip for Maintaining a Healthy Immune System: One of the best immune enhancing supplements is called “whole beta glucan.” It interacts with key immune cells to initiate a cascade of immune activity designed to protect the body against foreign challenges. Immunotix 3-6, produced by Xymogen is an excellent product. I recommend taking 1 capsule on an empty stomach, daily.

Osteopathic Treatment and the Immune System

Many of the body’s immune cells are located in the lymphatic system. The lymphatic system in the body helps maintain fluid balance, purifies and cleanses tissue, provides defense against invaders, and provides nutrition. Lymph node tissue is present everywhere, especially in the gut and colon. Because of this, lymph comes in contact almost immediately with toxins, bacteria, and viruses entering the system. This is why when we develop a cold or sore throat, there can be swollen lymph nodes in the neck ... that is where our immune cells are gathering to fight off the intruder.

Whenever injury occurs, inflammation brings increased blood flow to the area and increases lymph production. This results in an overall increased contact of body defenses with all toxins and foreign substances.

Any restrictions or tension in the tissues of the body can result in decreased lymph flow, which in turn can lead to congestion or swelling. An example would be post-traumatic or post-surgical scarring in post-mastectomy patients. These patients often have lymph nodes removed from the underarm area, resulting in edema (swelling in the arm).

Osteopathic manipulative technique (OMT) is an extremely gentle form of manipulation used to create a therapeutic response in the body. D.O.s or Doctors of Osteopathy, use subtle manual techniques on the bone, soft muscle, and connective tissue of the body. OMT removes restrictions in the body’s tissues and augments the flow of lymph fluid. This is done by applying lymphatic pumping techniques that further enhance lymph flow and drainage. In the example above, for a post-surgical scarring case where arm swelling has occurred due to lymph nodes removal, an OMT treatment would apply direct release manually to the scar and tissues in the armpit to enhance lymph flow.

Cranial osteopathy can produce balance in the entire neuro- endocrine immune system. With this manual therapy, a D.O. will perform gentle and precise palpation of the bones of the skull and also the breathing fluid rhythm, which is present throughout the entire body. For example, with a technique called CV-4 (compression of the fourth ventricle), the entire autonomic nervous system will relax to a still point, in which the fight-or-flight system becomes more balanced. This begins to reset the nervous system to a more relaxed overall state, resulting in improved circulation and immune function. Often patients will report feeling an overall sense of well-being, much less stress, better sleeping, and find they do not become ill with colds or flu while others around them do.

>>> Osteopathic Tip for Maintaining a Healthy Immune System: Regular osteopathic

manipulative treatment can help to keep your immune system strong, by balancing the body's overall stress response – “fight or flight.” I recommend seeing an osteopathic physician who does manual work once a month for prevention.

Exercise and the Immune System

There are many studies showing that moderate exercise done regularly has positive effects on the immune system. Aerobic exercise, like swimming, running, and cycling, has the most benefit. This type of repetitive activity leads to a demand for increased blood flow to the muscles and a rise in heart rate.

SOME BENEFITS OF AEROBIC EXERCISE

- Can decrease the risk of all-cause mortality by 40%
- Can reduce the risk of stroke by 25%
- Can decrease blood pressure and the resting heart rate, which may prolong heart function
- Facilitates weight loss
- Reduces total body fat
- Improves immune function and resistance to infection
- Reduces stress
- Improves sleep
- Decreases the risk of developing depression
- Facilitates detoxification

>>> Exercise Tip for Maintaining a Healthy Immune System: I recommend a minimum program of 30 minutes of aerobic exercise in your target heart rate zone, 5 – 6 days per week. This should be a priority for everyone. Your body was designed to move – so get moving!

Detoxification and the Immune System

Low-level, long-term exposure to toxins such as heavy metals (like lead, mercury, arsenic, cadmium), pesticides, industrial compounds and pollutants is associated with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), multiple chemical sensitivities (MCS), fibromyalgia (FM), neurodegenerative diseases (like Parkinson's) atherosclerosis, and many types of cancers. Common signs and symptoms of environmental toxicity include rashes, acne, headaches, general body aches and pains, fatigue, muscle weakness, fertility problems, memory loss, and chronic immune system depression.

The body has a complex two-phase system to remove a multitude of diverse toxins. Together the phases convert a toxic molecule into a non-toxic molecule that can easily be excreted from the body. The majority of detoxification occurs in the liver, but all tissues and organs have some ability to detoxify, including the intestines, skin, and lungs. However, as more toxins accumulate in the body over time, our internal detoxification system can begin to breakdown.

Nutritional Support for Detoxification

Detoxification is an energy-requiring process that puts a metabolic burden on the body. Therefore, water or juice fasting regimens are not effective for detoxing because they deplete the body of essential nutrients required for healthy detoxification. These fasts can have many adverse health effects, including decreased energy production, breakdown of lean tissue instead of fat, increased oxidative stress and unbalanced detoxification.

For those reasons, avoid fad diets or generic over-the-counter detox kits. The best program for you is

one custom tailored by a knowledgeable healthcare provider and should include a low-allergy, high protein rice powdered beverage with targeted gastro-intestinal, liver, and anti-inflammatory support.

>>> Detox Tip for Maintaining a Healthy Immune System: Even healthy people without any major complaints should detoxify at least twice a year, spring and fall, to lower their cumulative toxic load, and prevent many problems before they occur. OptiCleanse GHI, produced by Xymogen is my preferred detoxification support product. I recommend OptiCleanse GHI, along with a modified food elimination program specific to your needs.

Stress and the Immune System

Our daily lives are filled with stressors that are often unavoidable. Stress can trigger the body's response to perceived threat or danger – the “fight or flight” syndrome. During this reaction, certain hormones like adrenaline and cortisol are released, speeding up the heart rate, slowing digestion, shunting blood flow to major muscle groups, and giving the body a burst of energy and strength. Originally named for the ability to enable us to physically fight or run away when faced with danger, this reaction is now inappropriately activated in daily situations, for instance, while sitting in traffic or during a stressful day at work. When faced with chronic stress and an over-activated autonomic nervous system, people begin to see physical symptoms like headaches and increased susceptibility to colds. With more exposure to chronic stress, even more serious health problems may develop like depression, diabetes, hair loss, heart disease, obesity, obsessive compulsive disorder or ulcers, to name a few. And over time, this chronic stress weakens your adrenal glands, your thyroid gland, and ultimately your immune system. It's been estimated that as many as 90% of doctors visits are for symptoms at least partially stress-related!

SOME STRESS RELIEVING TECHNIQUES

- Breathing exercises
- Meditation
- Music
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)
- Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)
- Biofeedback / Neurofeedback
- Yoga
- Exercise
- Guided Imagery / Visualization
- Journaling

>>> Stress Reduction Technique for Maintaining a Healthy Immune System: Breathing Exercise

1. Sit or stand in a relaxed position.
2. Slowly inhale through your nose, counting to five in your head.
3. Let the air out from your mouth, counting to eight in your head as it leaves your lungs. Repeat several times. That's it!

Tips:

- As you breathe, let your abdomen expand outward, rather than raising your shoulders. This is a more relaxed and natural way to breathe, and helps your lungs fill themselves more fully with fresh air, releasing more “old” air.
- You can do this just a few times to release tension, or for several minutes as a form of

[meditation.](#)

- If you like, you can make your throat a little tighter as you exhale so the air comes out like a whisper. This type of breathing is used in some forms of [yoga](#) and can add additional tension relief.

Dr. David Johnston is an Osteopathic physician and the founder of the Osteopathic Wellness Center, LLC in Ridgefield, Connecticut. His practice focuses on a holistic approach to assisting clients back toward health with gentle hands-on Cranial Osteopathy and nutrition. For any questions, comments or further tips about How to Keep Your Immune System healthy, please call us at 203-438-9915, or email him at rjohnstondo@sbcglobal.net please visit our website www.OsteopathicWellness.net.

Filed under [Featured Articles](#), [New This Month](#), [Uncategorized](#) · Tagged with

- Search for:

- **This Months Magazine**



[Click Here to View This Month's Edition of Natural Nutmeg Magazine](#)

- **Like Us on Facebook**



Be the first of your friends to like this.

- **Community Calendar**

[View This Month's Community Calendar](#)

- **Newsletter**

Subscribe to the Newsletter

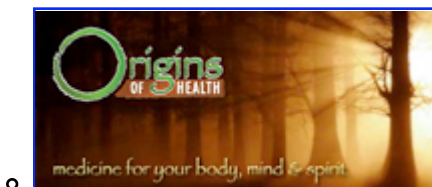
First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Signup

• Sponsors




• Recent Comments

- o [Ron Tedwater](#) on [Who's on Your Top 10 List...\(of Most Hated\)?!](#)
- o [oestrogen levels](#) on [Menopause, A Hormone Balancing Act – by Dr. Deanna M. Cherrone](#)

- [branchenverzeichnis online](#) on [Dr. Diane's Corner – August 2010](#)
- [Sarah Sherwood](#) on [Dr. Di's Corner – October 2010](#)

- **Categories**

[Children](#) [Complementary and Alternative Medicine \(CAM\)](#)
[Diet](#) [Dr. Di's Corner](#) [Emotional Well-being](#) [Exercise](#) [Ezine](#)
[Featured Articles](#) [Health New This Month](#) [Recipes](#) [Self-care](#) [Skin](#)
[Care](#) [Spirituality](#) [Uncategorized](#) [Videos](#) [Weight Loss](#)

Copyright © 2011 · All Rights Reserved · Natural Nutmeg Magazine · [Contact Us](#) ·  [Visit Us on Facebook](#) · [Log in](#)