

# Your Health

VOLUME 16 / NUMBER 1 / WINTER 2010

## Ginkgo Study Skewed JAMA Study Slams Herb by Modifying Clinical Data

There is a vast body of pharmacological and clinical research supporting numerous health benefits for ginkgo extracts, particularly for improving various symptoms and conditions associated with declining cognitive performance and poor circulation.

A new trial published in the prestigious *JAMA*, the American Medical Association's weekly peer-reviewed medical journal, reported that ginkgo supplements fare no better than placebo. Is it true though? Noted American herbalist Mark Blumenthal examined the facts.

This trial is not conclusive, he writes, nor should it in any way detract from ginkgo's reputation as a useful dietary supplement to help support and improve cognitive function and enhance peripheral circulation—conditions for which it has been reported to be effective in numerous clinical trials.

The major deficiencies Blumenthal found with the *JAMA* study are as follows:

The data published [in December 2009] are drawn from a previous clinical trial which was not designed to determine the decline in cognition.

In addition, about 40 per cent of the subjects dropped out over the six-plus year duration of the trial; the statistics reported in the study include the dropouts *for which no final data are available*.

The subjects in the study were not monitored for certain cognitive parameters until several years after the trial began, creating difficulty in determining accurately whether they experienced a decline in cognition or not.

Another unusual aspect of the trial was that the age of the subjects was quite advanced—at an average of 79 years

at the *beginning* of the trial! This age group is not typical of the age of both healthy people and those with mild cognitive impairment who use ginkgo for improving mental performance.

The study also lacked an active control, a potential third arm of the trial (i.e., besides the patients on

ginkgo or placebo) in which patients would have used a pharmaceutical medication with presumed efficacy, to determine to what extent the particular population being tested would respond. This was not possible for this trial since no conventional pharmaceutical drug has ever demonstrated the ability to prevent the onset of dementia or diminish its progression.

Also of note is the extensive research already conducted showing ginkgo's benefit as a supplement. Several recent publications have demonstrated an improvement in cognitive performance in subjects using the same German ginkgo extract [see sources at [www.herbalgram.org](http://www.herbalgram.org)]. At least 16 controlled clinical trials have evaluated various ginkgo extracts for healthy, non-cognitively impaired adults. And, a systematic review has shown that in 11 of these trials, ginkgo increased short-term memory, concentration and time to process mental tasks.

Herbalist Mark Blumenthal is Founder and Executive Director of the American Botanical Council; for more info link to [www.herbalgram.org](http://www.herbalgram.org)

*Ginkgo is the world's oldest living tree, dating back about 250 million years. Ginkgo leaves have been used in traditional Chinese medicine for about 500 years. For about the past 30 years the leaves of ginkgo have been made into a highly concentrated (50:1) extract, chemically standardized to compounds unique to ginkgo (ginkgolides and bilobalide) as well as other compounds. The leading German ginkgo extract has been subjected to a vast range of clinical trials documenting its ability to improve peripheral circulation and cognitive function, particularly in patients with early stages of mild cognitive impairment, senile dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and memory loss. Clinical trials also support the use of ginkgo extract in assisting elderly patients in walking longer distances without leg pain (peripheral arterial occlusive disease, also known as intermittent claudication). Standardized ginkgo extracts are approved for use as medicines in Germany and numerous other countries.*

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**Post Fails to Fact Check**

*The following op-ed piece is reprinted in part from the November 27, 2009 National Post:*

Progress often faces resistance. Even with the substantial challenges facing health care in Ontario, the province's recent decision to award prescribing authority to naturopathic doctors has its critics.

Ontario's decision is a step forward in improving patient care by allowing NDs to use their training to help address the substantial health challenges facing Ontario.

While it would be easy to dismiss the blogger comments reprinted in the National Post as alarmist, there's something to be learned from it: Many Canadians aren't aware of how safe, scientific and effective naturopathic medicine is.

Naturopathic medicine is based on the scientific assertion that the body, when given the appropriate support, has the potential to heal itself. This isn't a "magical and transcendent anomaly of physics." It's how the body works—and we've known it for centuries. Each time you heal from a cut, a cold or a broken bone, you're seeing *vis mediatrix naturae*, or "the healing power of nature" at work. It's not magic, just good science.

Of course, healing a broken bone is not much help if you keep breaking it. As naturopathic doctors (NDs), our focus is on finding and treating the cause of a chronic problem, not just managing the symptoms. The World Health Organization estimates that in 2005, 89 per cent of deaths and almost half of our health care dollars were attributed to chronic disease. Often, patients seek the care of NDs because they have run out of options using conventional therapies.

Some patients first come to NDs because they are looking for alternatives

to conventional medications or are interested in a more natural approach to health. Others want to be able to take better charge of their health and focus on prevention, or want help managing the side effects from medications or intensive medical therapies. As well, many patients have not had success with conventional options addressing chronic or unresolved conditions.

Naturopathic doctors are likely to undertake additional diagnostic testing to understand what else might be going on, and take the time to talk to patients about lifestyle and environmental factors, all in the interest of identifying the potential underlying causes of a patient's complaints. Most referrals to NDs come from other patients who have been helped, and from practitioners who understand for themselves how NDs practice.

This complementary system is vital when we are living in a society that is increasingly focused on symptom management. It may be that with all the pressures in the health-care system, conventional medicine is no longer fully considering the unique circumstances of each patient. This may be one reason for an increasing reliance on pharmaceuticals. There may be good evidence for how a drug may treat a symptom. But that may not be enough to achieve good health. In fact, over-reliance on pharmaceuticals may be making us sicker by masking the opportunity to diagnose or remediate the true cause of the disorder.

Most importantly, what patients want is to not be sick in the first place. The American Institute for Cancer Research determined that one-third of all

cancers could be prevented through exercise, diet and weight management. Naturopathic doctors have the clinical skills and training to help patients integrate these preventative strategies.

There is more and more evidence in support of the approaches to health that NDs employ. Diet, lifestyle, stress and environmental factors have been a focus of naturopathic care long before evidence fully showed the importance of these approaches. Similarly, the World Health Organization endorses the effectiveness of acupuncture and other elements of traditional medicine.

Meanwhile, the limits of randomized control trials favoured by the pharmaceutical industry are being increasingly recognized.

[cf. page 6 this issue—ed] Randomized control trials tend to test a single treatment approach to the eradication of a symptom. This approach works against individualized care, and tends to be biased toward over-treatment rather than prevention. Clinical studies are critical to advancing knowledge, but in themselves they are not the solutions to health problems.

All of these factors were carefully considered by the Ontario government and their advisory panel, as part of the decision in October to award prescribing authority to naturopathic doctors. The need for NDs to have prescribing authority was accepted by every other regulated health profession. It was recognized that NDs require prescribing authority because more and more of the natural substances that are a traditional part of naturopathic practice are be-

**A prescription for quackery**

Many 'naturopaths' reject basic scientific principles of medicine. So why in the world does the Ontario government want to give them the legal right to prescribe real drugs?  
National Post, November 24, 2009

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Canada. Each year in Canada over 20,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer with a fatality rate of up to 25 per cent. Although rare, men can also be diagnosed with breast cancer, and with a higher fatality rate. Breast health: What are you doing about it?

According to the 2007 World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research's Expert Report titled "Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective," there are three steps that any person can take to prevent about one-third of *all* cancers:

First, eat a mostly plant-based diet; this should include at least five portions or servings of a variety of non-starchy vegetables and fruits of different colours everyday.

Second, try to maintain a healthy weight; aim for a Body Mass Index (BMI) of between 21 and 23 and avoid weight gain and increases in waist circumference in adulthood.

Third, exercise regularly. If you don't already have an exercise regime, start with 30 minutes of brisk activity daily such as walking or cycling and work up to 60 minutes of vigorous, physical activity every day. (Before commencing any exercise regime, speak with your health care provider to assess your fitness readiness and advise you on pacing your program.)

Beyond these general recommendations, there are a number of specific things you can do to support and maintain your breast health:

**Breast Thermography:** This test measures body tissue heat energy. Generally "problem areas" show high temperatures due to increased blood flow and increased metabolic activity. Problems with tissue function can be found before structural abnormalities are seen on mammograms. Early detection provides the best outcomes. One of the benefits of thermography is that there is no squeezing, no pressure, no touching by equipment or technicians.

**Rebounder Trampoline:** Research has shown that rebounding for 10 minutes has the aerobic effect equivalent to playing tennis for 40 minutes or jogging for 30 minutes. The main effect that rebounding has on the body is through the lymphatic system; rebounding improves lymphatic circulation.

**EGCG:** This is the main polyphenol found in green tea (EGCG stands for epigallocatechin gallate). A new study conducted by researchers at the University of Mississippi found that consuming EGCG significantly inhibits breast tumour growth in female mice. EGCG extracts also help prevent premature cellular aging and damage. [cf. page 4, Tea as Tonic—ed.]

**Indole-3-carbinol or I3C:** As with EGCG, this is a powerful antioxidant. It's found naturally in many cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage and Brussels sprouts. I3C has been shown to prevent the expression of receptors in human breast cancer cells. I3C also helps to support the healthy metabolism of estrogen through the liver thereby reducing the negative impact of excess estradiol and estrone on breast tissue.

This article by Dr. Allison Patton, a naturopathic doctor practicing at the Mountainview Wellness Centre in South Surrey:  
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## HEADLINES

### National Stats

#### Deadly Lead

Children's jewellery made of 100 per cent lead remained for sale in Canada for a whole year—despite Health Canada knowing about the problem.

In January this year Health Canada warned that four products had between 95.5 and 100 per cent lead. Each was a children's piece of jewellery. The original tests, showing the lead levels, were conducted in November 2008. No health warning or recall was issued for over a year.

There is unfortunately no way to track how many pieces of jewellery were sold or distributed over the last 14 months. Canada's Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq acknowledged the government's error.

It has been illegal since 2005 to import or sell children's jewellery containing more than 0.6 per cent lead. Although wearing the jewellery is not an extreme health risk, lead poisoning can be fatal if a child chews, sucks or swallows the item.

Source: Vancouver Sun, January 19, 2009

#### By the Numbers

Although Canada's national health care budget exceeds \$183 billion, out of pocket (or individual) health costs are 15 per cent of overall health expenditures in Canada. Total health expenditure per capita in Canada in 2009 is estimated at \$5,542, about 11.5 per cent higher than 2007. Total health expenditure as a per cent of provincial GDP ranges from 8.2 per cent in Alberta to 16.7 per cent in PEI. Among the territories, Nunavut is the highest in Canada at 25.8 per cent. Just over 18 per cent of all health dollars in Canada are spent on pharmaceuticals. 16 per cent of Canadians are obese; over 35 per cent of Americans are. Per capita expenditures on prescription drugs in Canada exceed \$600; in the US they exceed \$1000. In 2007, private health insurers and households spent \$47.8 billion on health care. Between 1988 and 2007 private insurance firms increased their share of private-sector expenditure from 29.2 per cent to 40.7 per cent. Among OECD countries the highest spending per person on health care is the US (\$7,290 in 2007). Canada was in the top fifth of OECD countries. The lowest OECD per capita expenditures were in Turkey and Mexico; the lowest health spending in the world is in Burundi. In terms of government expenditures alone, Norway spends the most per capita at \$4500.

Source: OECD Health Data 2009; Canadian Institute for Health Information

#### Sloth Nurtures Stress

Exercise can make the brain more stress-resistant.

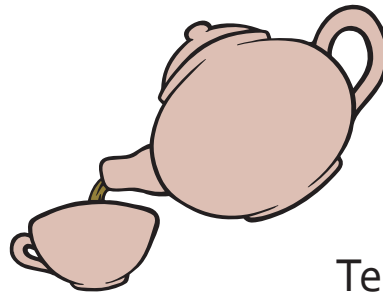
Researchers at Princeton University recently made an interesting discovery about the brains of rats that exercise: Some of their neurons respond differently to stress than the neurons of slothful rats.

Although it's a scientific fact that exercise stimulates the creation of new brain cells, their functionality had not been clearly determined. In the rat experiments, the new cells were specifically buffered from exposure to a stressful experience. Through exercise, i.e., running, the active rats had created a brain that appeared biochemically and molecularly calm.

In other experiments, moderate exercise was shown to reduce the effects of antioxidant stress. Anxiety and stress have been linked with excessive oxidative stress. In rat exercise studies it was shown that "fit" rats can sustain much higher levels of stress without any negative "brain" impact.

Although no studies have yet been performed on humans, the rat studies indicate that the "positive stress" of exercising prepares cells and structures within the brain to better handle stress in other forms.

Source: New York Times, November 22, 2009



#### Tea as Tonic

Green tea has had a recent vogue due its myriad antioxidant properties. Now it has been shown that drinking green tea can mitigate the effects smoking has on lung cancer. New research in Taiwan, amongst both smokers and non-smokers, showed that those who didn't drink green tea had a more than fivefold increased risk of lung cancer, compared to those who drank at least one cup per day. Among smokers, those who didn't drink green tea were over 12 times more likely to develop lung cancer, again compared to those who drank at least a cup a day.

Source: Maclean's, January 25, 2010

Question: My HIV-positive boyfriend is always suffering from some sort of skin affliction, and he's not alone. He and his positive friends often compare (and bemoan) their blotches and rashes. Are there skin conditions that are more common among people with HIV? What can they do about them?

T.P., Toronto

Answer by Dr. Aaron Hoo, a naturopathic doctor in downtown Vancouver [www.doctorschoicenutrition.ca]

When your skin is inflamed, it's often a sign that your "gut" lining is inflamed. This is really a sign that the body's immune system is compromised, because the majority of the immune system resides in the gut wall.

An unhealthy gut lining impedes the digestion of certain foods and results in food sensitivities, which, in turn, can show up on the skin as eczema. The first thing most NDs do for eczema is eliminate certain foods from the diet to pinpoint which foods are causing the problem. I would also suggest:

- taking the amino acid supplement L-glutamine;
- taking herbs that promote mucous production, such as slippery elm and aloe;
- taking digestive enzymes, such as bromelain (pineapple extract) and papain (papaya extract) to stimulate better digestion.

A disruption of the bacterial ecology of the gut can cause an overgrowth of *Candida* (yeast) in the body. This can lead to very red, itchy skin. NDs would recommend removing simple sugars and yeast-based foods from your diet and replacing them with healthy fats and proteins, at least in the short-term. The herb Oregon grape root helps rid the body of excess yeast and probiotic supplements help replenish the body's supply of "good bacteria."

Herpes infection is quite common among PHAs. I suggest taking zinc orally and applying zinc sulphate topically to help decrease the number of herpes outbreaks and speed up healing of sores. I also suggest taking lysine orally or topically.

Stress takes a heavy toll on the body's immune system, so take time to relax by practicing yoga, prayer, meditation or deep breathing exercises. Your skin will thank you.

This article originally appeared in the winter Positive Side Magazine. It is reprinted with the author's permission.

BCNA member Dr. Glenda Laxton has published the second in a series of cookbooks focussed on whole food recipes. *Natures Recipes II* is a cookbook of possibilities. Many people don't realize how easy it is to cook healthy, delicious meals without the use of animal fats or processed foods. Her cookbook is written for people who want to eat healthy, wholesome food, but need inspiration and guidance. The recipes in her book use whole grains and flours, cold-pressed oils and healthy fats, plant-based proteins, sea vegetables and natural seasonings, as well as natural, whole sweeteners.

The cookbook features: over 50 whole food recipes; a glossary of special ingredients; instructions on how to cook beans and whole grains; a list of a well-stocked whole foods pantry, and more. (For order information call Dr. Laxton's clinic at: 604 681 5585.)

#### Focus: Quinoa

Quinoa is a grain which originated in South America. The Incas held it to be sacred. It has a high protein content (up to 18 per cent) and, unlike wheat or rice, quinoa contains a balanced set of essential amino acids, making it an excellent complete protein source. Add to that its dietary fibre, and high levels of minerals (e.g., phosphorus, magnesium and iron), it is an excellent option for vegetarians and vegans. It is also gluten-free and most people find it very easy to digest.

Sample Recipe from *Natures Recipes II*: Quinoa Tabouli  
This is best if made up to 24 hours in advance so the quinoa can marinate in the dressing and soak up all the flavour.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups quinoa (uncooked)
- 4 cups filtered water
- juice of 2 lemons
- 1/2 cup of flax oil
- 1 bunch parsley chopped (flat or curly leaf)
- 2 tsp sea salt
- 1 cucumber (peeled and diced)
- 3-4 roma tomatoes (chopped)
- 2 green onions (chopped)
- 1 bunch fresh mint (chopped)

#### Directions:

1. Cook quinoa in water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 3-4 minutes. Turn off heat and let stand for 15 minutes. (Quinoa can also be cooked in a rice cooker.)
2. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, mix lemon juice, flax seed oil, and sea salt.
3. Add cucumbers, tomatoes, green onions, parsley and mint. Mix well.
4. When quinoa has cooled, add to vegetables and dressing. Mix well.
5. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Is Evidence Based Medicine the Answer to Better Health Care? Practitioners in the US weigh in on a New York Times essay which promoted evidence-based medicine as having the best outcomes and as the most cost-effective option.

“A silent and powerful third player in all medical decision-making is corrupted science—the bias that pervades medical research today through its dominance by the pharmaceutical and medical-device industries. This conflict is also rampant in the creation of clinical-practice guidelines, where industry often finances the academic researchers. Until academic medicine wrests control of medical education and research from corporate influence-peddling, doctors will continue to sort through confusing and conflicting clinical research, and many will ultimately base their treatment decision on which pharmaceutical representative visited them that week.”

Elizabeth Oram, Nurse Practitioner, New York City

“Evidence-based medicine offers much to improve our current medical-care system and is in part an answer to our health care crisis. What must be kept in mind, however, is the limit of evidence-based medicine: what is good for a group, as a whole, is not equally good for each and every member of the group. This is why our medical-treatment system will never be able to achieve the same evidence-based safety and efficiency as our air-transportation flight-safety system; human beings vary, sometimes dramatically. Ultimately, medical care always comes down to the individual.”

Calvin R. Brown, MD, Professor of Medicine at Northwestern University, Chicago

And speaking of corporate influence peddling: The American Academy of Family Physicians has come under fire from nutrition advocates for a new partnership with the Coca-Cola company.

Recently, the organization announced that it would accept a grant from Coke to “develop consumer education content on beverages and sweeteners for FamilyDoctor.org,” a consumer health Web site.

Dr. Lori Heim, president-elect of the AAFP, said in a statement that the organization was looking forward to working with the soda maker “and other companies in the future

Prince Charles has angered the medical establishment after calling for alternative medicine to be regulated. He clashed with the UK medical establishment by calling for alternative medicine to be given the official seal of approval.

The Prince, a long-standing supporter of complementary therapies, wants herbalists and acupuncturists in the UK to be formally regulated like physiotherapists and osteopaths.

His Foundation for Integrated Health says a system of registration will protect livelihoods under threat from new EU rules on the therapies.

But the Royal College of Physicians says it would confer an air of “respectability” on a branch of medicine that is not proven to work.

The row centres on an EU directive that will from next year ban herbalists, including practitioners of Chinese medicine, from prescribing many treatments unless the law recognizes them as health professionals.

The Foundation, which was set up by the Prince of Wales in 1993, says the solution is a system of registration that would put herbalists on equal footing to physiotherapists and osteopaths. Acupuncturists would also be registered.

A spokesman for the charity said that without the scheme the therapies could be driven underground, and lives put at risk.

Source: Daily Mail, December 1, 2009

on the development of educational materials to teach consumers how to make the right choices and incorporate the products they love into a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.”

But at a time when sugary beverages are coming under fire as contributors to the country’s obesity epidemic, the partnership is being met with disdain from several directions.

On Wednesday, the Centers for Science in the Public Interest said the AAFP should urge patients to avoid sweetened soft drinks, which “promote obesity, diabetes, tooth decay, and other health problems.”

Marion Nestle, a food policy researcher at New York University, called the partnership an “embarrassing conflict of interest.”

And Kelly Brownell, professor of psychology, epidemiology, and public health at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., called the AAFP’s acceptance of the grant money from Coke “disheartening.”

“There is no question that products made by the soft drink companies contribute to diseases that doctors then have to treat,” Brownell said. “Taking the money to develop guidelines for healthy eating is beyond imagination.”

Source: ABC News

## State Challenges State

The Big Island of Hawaii recently passed a resolution to exempt individuals from vaccinations. Portions of the resolution are reprinted below:

Whereas, the federal government has mandated that all Americans over the age of six months be vaccinated, and previous laws granting medical, religious, and philosophical exemptions to federally mandated vaccination programs would be repealed according to the Model State Emergency Health Powers Act; and,

Whereas, [the Hawaii statute] titled Exemptions from immunization states: "If at any time there is, in the opinion of the department of health, danger of an epidemic from any of the communicable diseases for which immunization is required no exemption from immunization against the disease shall be recognized. Quarantine shall be a legal alternative to immunization;" and

Whereas, vaccines are made with toxic chemicals and foreign proteins (viruses and bacteria), and some vaccines are made with genetically engineered viral and bacterial materials that prompt autoimmune diseases in many persons as well as raise cancer risks; and

Whereas, the \$7 billion United States Government fast-track program means that the government can legally rush vaccines onto the market in time for the autumn 2009 flu season without "normal" or adequate safety testing; and

Whereas, the Homeland Security Bill...shields the pharmaceutical industry from lawsuits for injuries caused by FDA-approved vaccines; and

Whereas, there is insufficient scientific evidence proving that vaccines are safe or effective, therefore it is not in the best interest of public health to impose mandatory vaccinations without exemptions; and

Whereas, swine flu and the flu vaccines both contain Thimerosal, a preservative for vaccines composed of mercury, one microgram of mercury is considered toxic and flu shots contain 25 micrograms. By age two, most United States children have received around 237 micrograms of mercury through vaccines; and

Whereas, the fast tracked government vaccines contain a substance called squalene that is suspected of causing serious long-term damage to the body; and

Whereas, in the wake of potential harm to the individual and the public from vaccinations, and the vacillating interpretation of "vaccine science," it is in the public's best interest to amend the vaccine laws, to include the right of medical, religious, and philosophical exemptions from

mandated vaccination programs; now, therefore, Be it Resolved by the Council of the County of Hawaii, that it recommends that state and federal elected officials who represent the people of the State of Hawaii amend vaccine laws to include medical, religious, and philosophical exemptions from mandatory vaccine programs that contain thimersol or squalene.



National Post  
continued from page 2

ing placed on restricted schedules. NDs are experts in these substances, but when they are removed from being available over the counter, they also potentially become restricted to NDs and their patients. An example is higher dosages of Vitamin D, which clinical studies are demonstrating is effective in preventing and treating a number of serious conditions.

As naturopathic doctors transition under new regulation in Ontario, there is an opportunity for us to work collaboratively with every member of an individual's health-care team, forming a new model that acknowledges the choice that patients are making for the more natural approach that NDs employ.

In our developing model of integrative medicine, naturopathic doctors are not costing the system more money. Instead, they are decreasing the costs of care for patients with chronic illness while providing better access to primary care for patients preferring a more natural approach.

We will continue to build relationships with practitioners knowledgeable enough to seek our partnership in the management of their patients. To those practitioners we have one message; we look forward to working with you.

This article excerpted from the National Post, was written by Drs. Meghan Walker and Tara Gignac licensed naturopathic doctors in Ontario

# Avoiding Colds & Flu

## Basic Steps to Improving Your Immune System

The fall and the winter months are the time of year we become most susceptible to catching colds and flu. This increased risk is partly due to increased exposure to viruses and bacteria but is also a result of several other underlying health factors that weaken the immune system. The best way to avoid a cold, flu, or other illness is to strengthen your overall health so the immune system can function optimally.

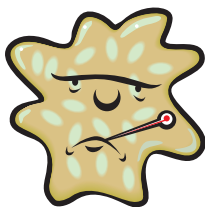
The immune system is your front-line defence against anything foreign to your body. The immune system identifies, remembers, attacks, and destroys disease-causing invaders. It is the body's surveillance system, intended to protect you from disease by searching out and destroying any health-damaging agents.

While reducing your exposure to viruses and bacteria by washing your hands, covering your mouth when you cough, and avoiding hand contact with your eyes, nose, and mouth is important, there is a certain level of exposure that you cannot prevent. When this exposure occurs it is important for the immune system to be "up to the challenge."

### Three Common Stressors to the Immune System

The immune system requires a steady flow of energy throughout the day in order to do its job effectively. When energy is "wasted" on other stressors the immune system simply gets fewer resources. Therefore, when you are exposed to a virus or bacteria your body cannot mount an effective defence.

If your diet contains food that your body is allergic or sensitive to the immune system will mount an attack against the food and as a result leave the body more susceptible to other exposures. There are more white blood cells in your intestines than anywhere else in your body and when they are tied up with food allergies they cannot handle other threats. It's beneficial to avoid known allergens and other foods that can cause digestive issues as well as to consider food allergy testing to iden-



tify your food allergies.

Emotional stress, financial stress, and personal pressure inhibit the immune system. These forms of stress increase the amount of cortisol produced in the adrenal glands. Cortisol directly inhibits the ability of white blood cells to seek and destroy pathogens. This time of year can be emotionally stressful for many people but it is important to seek support and strengthen your stress coping mechanisms in order to prevent infections.

During the fall and winter months the body simply requires more sleep. This is in part due to the natural seasonal rhythms that are part of human evolution. As nights get longer and the amount of daylight diminishes the body's internal clock shifts too. More sleep is also required due to the increased stressors of a colder, damper, and more stressful environment. Be kind to yourself and ensure you are getting enough sleep each night.

Naturopathic doctors are trained to identify areas of the body that require immune support. Identifying and treating the causes of a weakened immune system provides effective and efficient support for preventing and overcoming illness. Whether or not you get vaccinated for the flu you still need to address the health of your immune system in order to have optimal immunity. The natural approach to cold and flu prevention should involve a thorough assessment of your health, identify and remove the obstacles to effective immune function, and provide the essential nutrients required by the immune system.

Naturopathic doctors can support the immune system with nutrition, vitamin and mineral supplementation, botanical medicine, acupuncture, homeopathy, physical medicine, hydrotherapy, injection therapies, and IV therapy. NDs can also support the body through acute infections and help reduce the severity of infections and speed the recovery process.

This article by Dr. Brent Barlow, a naturopathic doctor practicing in Kelowna: [www.drbarlownd.com](http://www.drbarlownd.com)

Your Health is published quarterly by the British Columbia Naturopathic Association, the professional association for naturopathic physicians in

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VOL 16 / NO 1 / WINTER 2010

The BCNA offers patients, across the province, referrals to licensed naturopathic doctors (NDs) in their area as well as general information on the profession.

Your Health is archived online at [www.bcna.ca](http://www.bcna.ca).

Contact the BCNA online at [www.bcna.ca](http://www.bcna.ca), call us at 604 736 6646 (or toll free in Canada at 1 800 277 1128), e-mail us at [bcna@bcna.ca](mailto:bcna@bcna.ca), or write to us at BCNA, 2238 Pine St., Vancouver, B.C., V6J 5G4.