

Illness Prevention & Pandemic Self-Care:

Stay Healthy: Get Back to Basics!



To stay healthy, it's important to support your immune system. There are many wonderful herbs and supplements you can take to boost your immune system (suggestions below)—and still one of the best things you can do is **keep it simple & support your immune system by supporting your body's overall health and balance.**

Key tips? Keep stress levels as low as possible & support your digestion to work well

Here are some basics to help sustain, rejuvenate and restore:

Stress & Anxiety Relief



There are so many very real sources of stress right now: uncertainty, financial worries, fears of getting or already being sick. Trying to reduce anxiety is important for general wellbeing, and also because chronic stress (cortisol) suppresses the immune system. Good sleep, exercise, understanding your sources of stress and getting in touch with your emotions are key to relieving stress and anxiety.

Helpful herbs include:

Skullcap, Chamomile, Lemon balm (not if you have hypothyroid issues), Passionflower as tincture (5-15 drops, 3x/day) or tea (1-3 cups/day)



At least 7-8 hours per night! If you feel on the edge of getting sick, make sure you get extra sleep. Lack of sleep suppresses T-cell (immune cell) function, so you need to rest to keep your immune system healthy. Getting enough sleep also supports mental health. Try to get to sleep by 10:30pm and create regular sleep routines!

Get enough Sleep

Helpful herbs for promoting sleep include:
California Poppy, Passionflower or Skullcap as tincture (5-15 drops, 3x/day) or tea (1 cup, 25 minutes before bed)

Exercise

Eat well



Eat healthy, simple, easy to digest foods!

Your favorite potato chips can be very comforting, though if possible, it's best to focus on a whole foods diet right now. Eating foods that are easy to digest will help nourish and fuel all of your body's other systems—including nervous and immune systems. Eating too much and eating too much cold or frozen food can weaken your digestive fire. Try to eat your food warm and stop eating before you're full!



Foods to emphasize:

Whole grains, veggies and proteins. Warm and cooked foods.

Foods to limit/avoid:

Dairy. Sugar (both refined sugar, and concentrated natural sugar such as fruit juice!) Alcohol. Processed foods.

Helpful herbs include:

Taking a "bitters" herbal formula (5-10 minutes before eating) can stimulate digestion. Burdock or Dandelion Root (especially if you lean towards constipation), and Fennel seeds (if you have bloating or gas) can support digestion as tincture (5-15 drops, 3x/day) or tea (1-3 cups/day).



Create a Personal Care Plan

Shelter in place & uncertainty can be challenging physically, emotionally, energetically and spiritually.

What do you need to do every day to try to keep balance and nourish your body, your mind and your spirit?

Daily checklist! What are your commitments to care for yourself and your loved ones as best you can in these times? Do you want to put a list on your wall to remind yourself? Do you need a buddy to help support you?



Exercise is key for stress reduction and mental health, in addition to circulating immune cells throughout your body. From social distance hikes and jogging outside to indoor dance or yoga classes over video, try to do some movement every day and get your heart rate up for 20 minutes or more at least three times per week!

Connect with Nature



Get outside at least once per day, put your feet directly on the earth, hang out with a redwood or other trees (it's very grounding!), observe the plants around you. Appreciate beauty and the continuing cycles of nature even as our human lives have been interrupted.

Connect with your Emotions

How do you feel? Go deep!

One of the first steps in managing stress, anxiety and difficult emotions is to connect with how you feel. Stress, shelter in place or being an essential worker can be a pressure cooker stirring up challenging behaviors in ourselves and others. At the same time, lessened social interactions can mean more time for introspection and reflection.

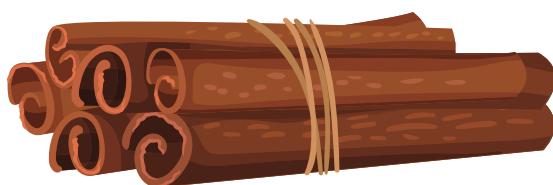
What do you notice about how you behave under stress?

What do you notice about your coping mechanisms?

This can be a good time to observe your deeply rooted behaviors with curiosity and compassion, and explore how you might shift ones that don't feel like they're working. Be gentle with yourself & others in these challenging times.



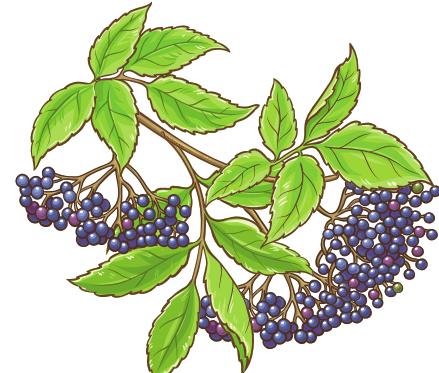
Stay Warm



Stay warm & hydrated!

Drink lots of warm/hot water, and keep your body warm! Your tissues need proper hydration to work optimally—including for lung tissue to stay healthy, and for skin to work well as a barrier.

Herbal Medicine



Immune & Lung support herbs

In addition to the general health tips above, it can be helpful to take herbs and supplements to boost your immune system, but remember to take breaks – you don't need to be "boosting" all the time! Let your body integrate the support. Try taking immune support herbs for two weeks, then take two weeks off before you start again. There are many options!

Here are some safe and abundant herbs to start with:

Elderberry

A powerful anti-viral and lung support herb! Take 5-15 drops of tincture, 3 times per day or 2-3 cups of tea.

Astragalus

Deep immune support – but only take as a preventative, stop taking it if you feel any cold or flu-like symptoms. Take 5-15 drops of tincture, 3 times per day, or add dried 2-3 pieces of long, dried astragalus root to soups, stews, broths or long-cook dried beans. Don't take if you have leukemia or other white blood cell issues.

Mullein

A safe and effective support for lung health that can be taken over the long term. Take 5-15 drops of tincture, 3 times per day or 2-3 cups of well-strained tea.

Fire-y Vinegar

A traditional blend of apple cider vinegar with ingredients such as garlic, ginger, onion, horseradish and cayenne. Finely chop those ingredients (you can use a food processor to finely dice them) and cover with apple cider vinegar. Let sit for 1 month then strain. Take 1 tsp of the vinegar each day!

Raw Garlic

Garlic (especially raw) helps boost your immune system and is great for lung health. Chop up 1-2 cloves of raw garlic, let sit for 5 minutes (this part is important to activate the immune-boosting compounds), then swallow with water. Make sure you don't do this on an empty stomach because it can feel uncomfortable in your stomach. Even eating a few crackers or bites of food is enough.

Supplements

Vitamin C (500 mg/day) and Zinc (10mg/day) are helpful immune supports.



Need Support?

These are stressful times. Medicinal plants are strong allies for all depths of healing. If you would like support with physical, emotional or spiritual balance, I'm seeing clients remotely. Sliding scale available.

Rinsing & Steaming for Healthy Barriers

Since respiratory illnesses enter through the nose and mouth, it's helpful to rinse these areas with salt water and/or herbs! Humidity helps the hairs that line your airways work properly to clear viruses and other particles, and salt water can make the tissue less hospitable to bacteria and viruses.

Helpful daily practices include:

Humidifier

Aim for 40-60% humidity. You can add essential oils of tea tree, eucalyptus, thyme, rosemary, or cinnamon. Simmering a pot of water on the stove and adding fresh herbs, pine, cedar or redwood needles also works well.

Stems

Boil water, pour into a big bowl, put your head over the steam, cover your head & bowl with a towel to keep steam in, and breathe slowly and deeply. You can add fresh eucalyptus or bay leaves, rosemary, thyme or 1-2 drops of essential oil (more is not better! Really only use a couple of drops).

Gargle with salt water

Add 1/4-1/2 tsp salt to 8 ounces warm water, dissolve and gargle 1-2 times/day

Neti

An ancient Ayurvedic practice of rinsing the nasal passage with salt water using a neti pot, sometimes with herbs. Instructions here: www.doctorblossom.com/neti.



Feeling Sick?

If you feel that you might have a cold/flu or mild COVID-19 symptoms, please work with a qualified herbal practitioner (there can be many phases to illness, and different herbs indicated for each phase).

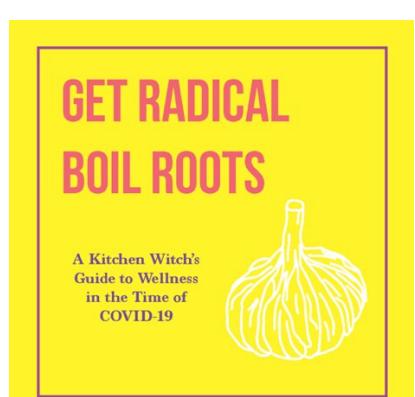
If you are having trouble breathing or are experiencing strong symptoms, please consult a medical professional immediately.

More info

For more herbal info & recommendations, please feel free to get in touch with me at tracey@fromtheroot.org.



You can also check out "Get Radical Boil Roots" an herbal guide put together by a collaboration of many skilled herbalists (available online at bit.ly/herbs4healing).



From the Root