

Boost Your Immunity against Colds and Flu with Natural Remedies by Dr. Vijaya Nair

However, there are three strategies where a healthy diet and natural supplements can be helpful in warding off viruses, such as the Swine Flu. They are:

1. **Immune system support**
2. **Regulation of the body's own inflammatory response**
3. **Anti-viral activity**

1. Natural Products For Immune System Support: A healthy immune system is our only real defense against all the bacterial, viral and fungal organisms in our environment. It is best to have responsive and efficient immune system at the earliest exposure to the virus. Foods high in nutrients such as Vitamin C, Vitamin A and Zinc, when used in combination with other herbs and spices work synergistically to support the immune system.

Consume more fermented foods and supplements in your diet, especially fermented soybean which contains probiotic bacteria, isoflavones, saponins omega-3 fatty acids, and phytosterols. These help to build one's immunity by helping to maintain peak levels of natural killer cells and macrophages (types of white blood cells) and by supporting cytokine production, which responds to infections.

2. Natural Products For Modulation of Body's Inflammatory Response:

Inflammatory reactions provoked by the Influenza virus infection can contribute to organ and tissue damage and pneumonia. Individuals at high risk include those whose immune systems are already compromised by pneumonia, chronic infections such HIV/AIDS, diabetes and also the elderly.

It may be possible to diminish these damaging reactions by using anti-oxidants and natural anti-inflammatory products including, fermented soy supplements, Curcumin, Resveratrol, Selenium, Green tea, Beta Carotene, Co-Q10, N-Acetyl Cysteine, Alpha Lipoic Acid, Quercetin and Omega-3 fatty acids.

3. Natural products with anti-viral properties: Green Tea has very effective antiviral properties. One cup of green tea provides 10-40 mg of polyphenols and has antioxidant effects greater than a serving of broccoli, spinach, carrots, or strawberries. The high antioxidant activity of green tea makes it beneficial for protecting the body.

Curcumin is the yellow compound active ingredient extract of tumeric. Curcuminoids have anticarcinogenic, anti-atherosclerotic, anti-inflammatory, (including anti-arthritis), anti-viral, antifungal and immune regulating properties.

Resveratrol is a compound found in large amounts in red wine, grape seeds, and Japanese knotweed. Resveratrol is known to be absorbed into the blood, and it is believed to be part of the "French Paradox" where many people in France eat a high fat diet, yet have

low rates of heart disease. The root of Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum multiflorum* aka "He Sho Wu") is the richest known source of Resveratrol. It has long been used in a variety of herbal medicines in China and Japan, where it is considered a tonic and life prolonging plant. This plant has spread to many other countries and is naturalized in the US and parts of Europe.

The effects of alcohol on a person infected with avian flu raises obvious concerns - drinking red wine might help prevent an infection, but once an infection does occur, the alcoholic component of wine is probably not desirable. And Resveratrol in wine is not stable: after opening a bottle of red wine, the Resveratrol begins to oxidize and much of it is degraded within 24-48 hours.

Conclusion: There are a number of simple and low cost preventative measures and alternative remedies that are useful for reducing the transmission of the Influenza virus. Judicious precautions have to be taken now in wake on the fact that there is a strong possibility of the virus returning in a more virulent form during the fall and winter months.

Please see the following articles for more information on these topics:

- [Treatment of Epidemic and Pandemic Influenza](#)
- [Antiviral effect of catechins in Green Tea on Influenza Virus](#)
- [Inhibition of Influenza A Virus Replication by Resveratrol](#)
- [Soy and Immunity](#)
- [Ubiquitin Vacuolar Protein Sorting System and Entry of Influenza Virus Into Host Cells](#)