

WELCOME TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON!

HOOORAY?



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Well, it's not quite like that. You see, believe it or not, we have now entered the beginning of Cold and Flu season. Boo!! For the kids it may seem like a welcome day or two off from school, (well sometimes) and for the parents, it's a babysitting nightmare! Truth be told however, no one enjoys being sick. Keeping yourself healthy and flu-free is easier than you may think. Just because half of your class is sick, or everyone in the office is walking around with the sniffles doesn't mean that you are destined to become ill. **Taking a few simple steps of precaution can make all of the difference between making up sick days and enjoying vacation days!**

The immune system is our body's defense against foreign invaders, such as viruses (flu) and bacteria (infection.) Keeping your immune system healthy is like having a good back up plan. All great athletes know about this. They train hard so their bodies stay healthy and they can perform at their best. But they still have therapists and health professionals on call because they know sometimes life just throws a curve ball.

Before your immune system becomes compromised it's important to know how to react and how to plan to take care of your body. Some key points to consider.

Stress. We hear it all the time, and too many of us dismiss the significant role that stress plays in our lives. The facts are quite clear. Added stress creates a substantial **NEGATIVE** impact on the body.

Whether it's emotional or physical, too much stress wears down the immune system.

Exercise. Exercise offers great stress relief, as well as a long list of other benefits. Exercise is one of the **BEST** strategies to improve immune function. By increasing circulation and blood flow through the body, nutrients are delivered more effectively throughout your system.

Sanitation. Hand washing is crucial when it comes to immune health. Studies indicate frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading illness. Hand washing requires only soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer — a cleanser that doesn't require water. As you touch people, surfaces, and objects throughout the day, you accumulate germs on your hands. In turn, you can infect yourself with these germs by touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Although it's impossible to keep your hands germ-free, **washing your hands frequently** can help limit the transfer of bacteria, viruses and other microbes.

Keeping your Digestive Tract Healthy. **In case you didn't know, most of our immune system (about 80%) is actually located in the gut. Yes our intestines!** Keeping your digestive system healthy is as easy as adding in a good

probiotic into your diet. Studies show that children taking a combined probiotic (more than one strain) experienced a 73% reduction in fevers and 84% reduction in antibiotic use.

Eating. If you've become a regular reader of SportsLink then you know how I feel about good nutrition!! Diet is crucial to immune health! **Sugar and refined flour products stress the immune system. Similarly, hydrogenated oils and deep-fried foods should be avoided. Fresh, brightly colored produce will help to boost your immune system.** Fresh produce is high in vitamin C. The bright color in plant foods is from carotenes and bioflavonoids. These are powerful antioxidants that will help to protect your cells. The carotenes are precursors to vitamin A. (these also help with Acne as well!!)

Vitamin D. Research has proven that low levels of Vitamin D have a negative effect on the immune system. Seldom thought of as an immune vitamin, some scientists think that part of the reason for flu season is the short days—less sunlight and vitamin D. Although that isn't as much of an issue here in sunny Florida, we are still finding that most children as well as adults are deficient in this key nutrient. **Be sure to get a minimum of 15 minutes of unprotected (yes, without the sunscreen) sun exposure daily.**

While this is just a short list of some of the points to consider in keeping your immune system healthy, **don't forget the basics such as getting a good**



night's sleep, and keeping a positive mental attitude about life! Optimism breeds joy! A happy body is a healthy body!!

Please note: It's important to know that not all supplements are made equally. While I appreciate the fact that there are literally hundreds of thousands of supplements on the market, I take painstaking efforts to find the most efficacious products that offer real results. I am quite selective with the companies that I use, as I would not make any recommendation until I have thoroughly researched a company and the products that it offers. To that end, I have on my website a variety of immune support products that I not only endorse, but take personally and give to my family as well.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding immune health. Additionally, if you would like to take a complimentary health assessment please visit my website at www.merylb.com and fill out the box titled Free Health Questionnaire. 🐾