

TO YOUR HEALTH



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STAYING HEALTHY IN FLU SEASON

by Barbara Chenoweth, NP

We've heard it all before: wash your hands! Yet, this simple advice turns out to be one of the most effective ways to stay healthy, especially during the flu season. Another way to prevent flu or colds from spreading is to stay in when you are coughing and sneezing. If you come down with a cold or flu, it's important to stay in for at least 24 hours after a fever. And, as always, having the flu vaccine remains an important means of protection.

This year the flu is more complicated than in previous years when all we had to contend with was the usual, seasonal flu. Instead we not only have the seasonal flu but the new H1N1 flu that has been in the news since last spring. The H1N1 flu seems to target children and young adults. Only 1% of people over 65 years have come down with the H1N1 flu. And for this reason, when the new vaccine becomes available, it will be given first to people under 25 years, pregnant women, and health and child care workers. It is thought that older people may have some immunity due to exposure to similar strains of H1N1, such as the Spanish flu, prior to 1957, (*Dr. Andrew Weil's Self Healing*, July 2009).

To date, the incidence of serious complications and deaths from the H1N1 flu has been well below that of seasonal influenza. However, the concern remains that this variety of flu could change into a more serious strain. Since the viruses that cause flu are constantly changing, it is possible, though the likelihood is unknown, for a new variety of this strain to evolve into a more virulent flu, similar to that of the Flu of 1918. For this reason, a good deal of attention has been focused on tracking and preventing

the H1N1 flu.

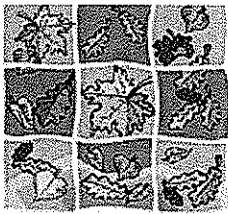
The symptoms of the H1N1 flu are similar to the seasonal flu with fever being the hallmark sign to look for. A rapid flu test can be given to confirm the diagnosis. The treatment is supportive: fluids, rest, Tylenol for fever and staying in.

Building up the immune system is just as important as the flu vaccine. Eating a healthy diet, rich in vitamins, getting regular exercise and sleeping at least seven hours each night are ways to protect ourselves from viruses. Health practices such as frequent hand washing, carrying hand sanitizer, and staying away from sick people offer additional defense. It is possible that flu viruses can live as long as 48 hours, especially on hard surfaces like wood, door handles etc., (www.mayoclinic.com). For this reason it is important to wash hands frequently and avoid touching the nose and mouth.

Along with keeping the body healthy, keeping stress at bay is the next most important way to stay healthy during flu season. Even with the best health practices, stress can wear down the immune system. Like a chronic illness, chronic stress takes a toll by depleting energy, causing depression and interfering with the body's natural ability to throw off acute illness.

Recognizing stress is the first step. It may manifest itself by fatigue, irritability, insomnia, poor concentration and generalized feelings of anxiety. Reducing stress often involves changing our routine: seeing friends more often, talking over a stressful situation, becoming more physically active and doing things just for fun.

Prevention = hand washing + less stress!

**IN THE FALL**

by Margaret Ryding, Acupuncturist

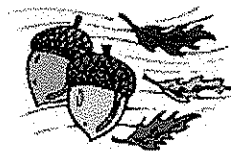
Autumn is here. The sky is the clearest blue of any time of the year. The air has become lighter, cooler, and drier. You can see farther. The leaves have changed colors and are falling. Bittersweet is bursting open with red and orange berries. The days are shorter and colder. The connection with the heavens is strongest in Chinese philosophy. The seasons serve as metaphors for understanding the energy phases in nature and ourselves. In the fall, the energy is of letting go. This is a time of releasing before moving into the dark of winter. Like the leaves falling from the trees, this is the time to let go of what no longer serves our lives. With this letting go there can be grief and sadness. This too is a natural part of our cycle. It is time to prepare for the season of rest.

In Chinese medicine, autumn is associated with the metal element. This governs the lungs and large intestines. If you have a history of digestive or bowel weakness, or of winter colds and lung problems, this is the time to prepare yourself for staying well this fall and winter. The lungs and large intestine must stay clean for their best function. Exercising and deeply breathing fresh air daily helps the lungs. Keeping your neck and chest warm will also help prevent colds. Eating healthy, warming foods such as soups and stews will aid your digestion. Drink 6-8 glasses of water daily. Move your bowels between 5-7 AM each morning. (According to the Chinese clock this is the best time for the bowel.) Come in for an acupuncture tune up. During this season, slow down. Allow time for meditation and reflection.

In Black Water Woodsby Mary Oliver
(An excerpt)

*To live in this world
You must be able
To do three things:
To love what is mortal;
To hold it
Against your bones knowing
Your own life depends on it:
And, when the time comes
To let it go,*

May you have a healthy and blessed autumn.

**NEWS FLASH
BUMPER ACORN CROP**

There is an unusually large acorn crop this year. Please be careful as you walk outside on Village paths. It is all too easy to lose your footing if you step on the acorns.

HEALTH EDUCATION LECTURE

Dr Stephen Bartels will present "The Mind-Body Connection in Aging." Dr. Bartels is a professor and physician at Dartmouth Medical School, Hanover, NH. He is also the Director of Dartmouth's Center for Health and Aging. Please join us on Thursday, October 29, at 7:00 p.m. in Center Auditorium.