

Fight Swine Flu With Alternative Remedies

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Because flu viruses are always changing, you may be protected against one strain and still come down with another, even if you got the vaccine. One of the best ways to protect yourself against swine flu is to maintain a healthy immune system. That means eating healthy, maintaining emotional, physical and spiritual balance, establishing good sleep patterns, getting fresh air and sunlight, and practicing good hygiene.

National Vaccine Information Center offers the following non-toxic suggestions:

1. Wash your hands frequently.
2. Avoid close contact with those who are sick.
3. If you are sick, avoid close contact with those who are well.
4. Cover your mouth if you cough or sneeze.
5. Drink plenty of fluids, especially water.
6. Get adequate sleep.
7. Eat a healthy diet rich in vitamins and minerals, especially foods containing vitamin C (such as citrus fruits) and vitamin D (such as cod liver oil) and spend a few minutes a day in sunlight to help your body make and store vitamin D.
8. Exercise regularly when you are well.
9. Lower stress.
10. Consider including holistic alternatives in your wellness or healing plan, such as chiropractic adjustments, homeopathic and naturopathic remedies, acupuncture and other health care options

- **Probiotics:** A healthy immune system depends on a digestive system that functions well. Probiotics, or beneficial bacteria, play a critical role in maintaining and enhancing the health of the intestinal tract, which is directly associated with immune system health. The probiotic supplement should contain at least four different species of beneficial bacteria, such as Lactobacillus, Acidophilus, Enterococcus, and Bifidobacterium.

- **Echinacea** (purple coneflower): This herb can stimulate the immune system. A recent Canadian study found that Echinacea promoted the activity of key factors in the immune system, including macrophages and interferon.

- **Garlic:** Research shows that garlic stimulates the infection-fighting white cells and enhances antibody production. Garlic also is an antioxidant. These benefits are usually credited to garlic's sulfur-containing compounds, sulfides and allicin. A suggested dose is 250 mg twice daily of a supplement containing extract of allium sativum standardized to 0.6 percent allicin.

- **Zinc:** This mineral increases the production of disease-fighting white cells and also helps these cells release more antibodies. A recommended daily dose is 15 to 25 mg.

- Ginger: Ginger has antiviral properties, and when you use it as a tea, it also helps break up mucus and congestion.