

Boosting Your Immunity

Last week I wrote about Ryan and his constant stuffy nose and frequent bouts of secondary infections of the throat. That probably sounded familiar, bringing to mind one or more members of your family. While dietary changes will be needed to address the root of a chronic stuffy nose, here are some thoughts on how to support you or your child's body from producing secondary infections that happen so often during the winter months—long known for that time of year when we are more inside and in much closer exposure to others, frequently traveling, and under additional stress at work or school.

Here are five of my favorite winter tips to boost your immune system:



1. This DIY warming and immune boosting tea. A great daily sip for you at the office or as an afterschool treat for the kids.
2. A big steaming pot of veggie-full miso broth. South River Organic is by far my favorite miso brand and some flavors are available locally at Wheatsville and Whole Foods while the rest can be obtained online. I consistently vary the veggies, but always include a healthy portion of mushrooms and greens like bok choy or fresh spinach. Remember—miso is a living fermented food that should not be cooked—stir the paste into the hot veggies and broth right before serving.
3. The magic sock treatment! At the first sign of a sore throat or oncoming symptoms bring out the wool socks and

follow each step precisely and stimulate the healing power of hydrotherapy introduced by Sebastian Kneipp in the 1850's. This is best repeated three days in a row.



4. Rebound your way to healthy lymphatic drainage boosting your immunity and working in your daily exercise. Check out this great blog post by life coach Barrie Davenport who shares her discovery of rebounding and helpful tips for exercising with one.
5. Gemmotherapy protocols that are customized by your practitioner to support your individual areas of weakness. Because gemmotherapy both optimizes elimination organs and provides phytonutrients to organ tissues, it is now the most potent plant based medicine available.

Curious about what organs make up your immune system? Here is a great article with further information.

Midweek Pause—Mindful Eating



“Mindful eating can cultivate seeds of compassion and understanding that will strengthen us to do something to help hungry and lonely people to be nourished.”

– Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace in Every Step

Consider: That the act of eating mindfully is a simple, easy practice that we have the opportunity to engage in at least three times a day. Consider your last meal. Maybe it was just a few moments ago. How did it go? Do you remember what it

tasted like, how it smelled or who was eating with you? Thich Nhat Hahn invites you to pause when food is placed before you, look at those around you, smile, then look down at your food and allow it to be real.

Prepare: While every meal presents a new opportunity for practice you may wish to choose one meal a day and commit to observing these short yet powerful moments of mindfulness. Make a commitment today to practice at your very next meal.

Do: When the next plate of food is laid before you take in the moment, your companions, and the food with all of your senses. You won't need more than a few seconds, just enough for a few deep breaths to connect with those being nourished and those who long for nourishment.

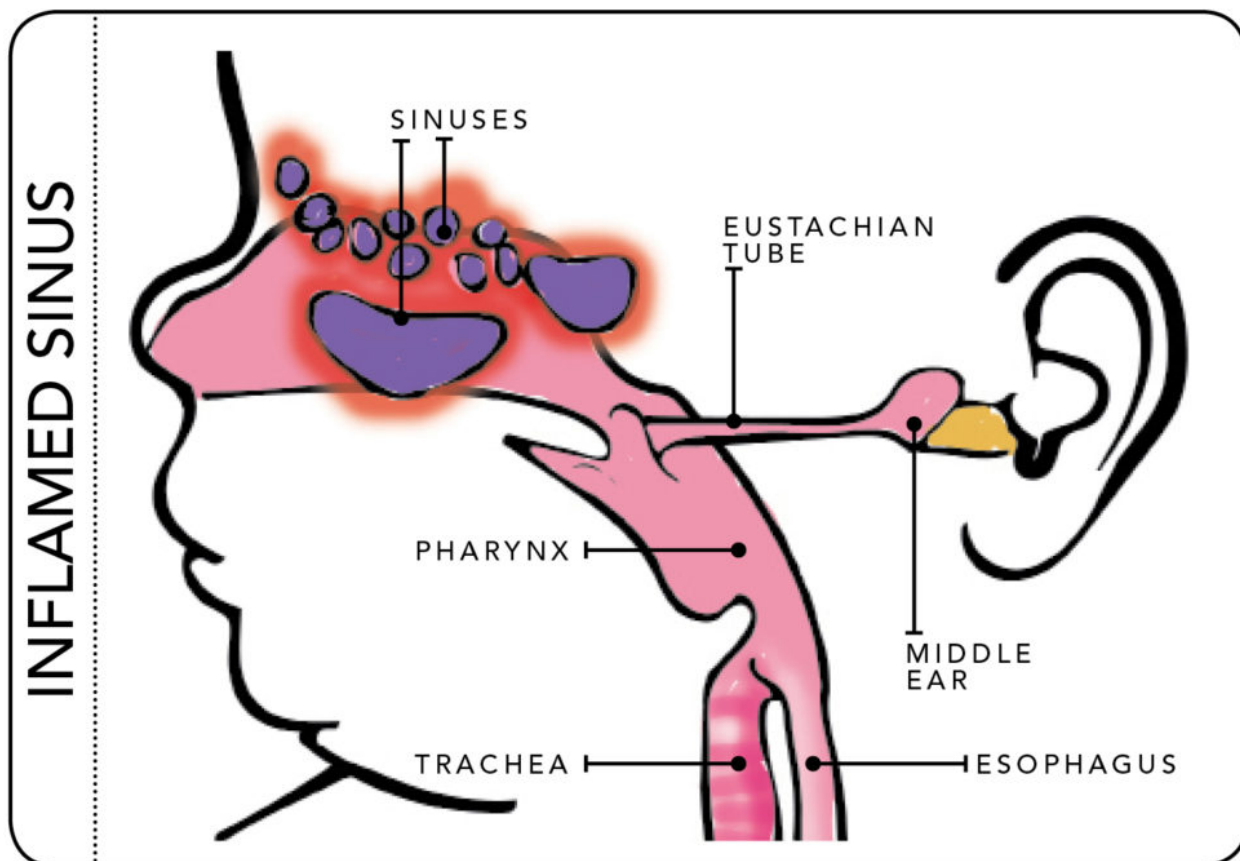
Photo by Cala on Unsplash

Lauren's Kitchen: Kitchen Sink Raw Cookies



It's that time of year when the break room at your office is full of all the foods you are or should be avoiding. How about bringing along these treats from Rawmazing and you'll have everyone wishing they ate as good as you! Ramp up one batch a bit by substituting organic dried cherries for the raisins.. oh, yum. If you're looking for more clean eating options, be sure to check out my Radically Simple Eating board on Pinterest.

Frequent Childhood ENTs



Eight year old Ryan came into my practice last spring with his mother. She began his story by telling me it seemed like Ryan consistently had a runny or stuffy nose. Sure enough Ryan had quite the mucus-y congestion going on and angry red irritation around his nose as a telltale sign that this was not a one-off experience. His mom went on to tell me that when he was young she believed he would just outgrow it, but that was not the case. It drove her crazy she said because he was always sniffing and congested. Once Ryan was in school it seemed like every 6 weeks the congestion would be

accompanied by a sore throat or barking cough that would keep him home.

Ryan's mom said of course he had been given more antibiotics than she would have liked, but she didn't know there was really another option. However, it seemed to her as if he would just clear up from one round of antibiotics and within ten days the sinus congestions was right back where he started. I asked Ryan's mom about his health during early childhood and she shared he had also had his share of ear infections which she believed was just part of the territory.

Hearing Ryan's mother tell their story, I understood her frustration. Real options to successfully break the cycle of chronic ENT's are not readily available or necessarily discussed in the pediatrician's office. That is because the problem is seen as being located in the sinus area, not where it really exists. Like all mothers though she just wanted her son to feel better and not be missing so much school.

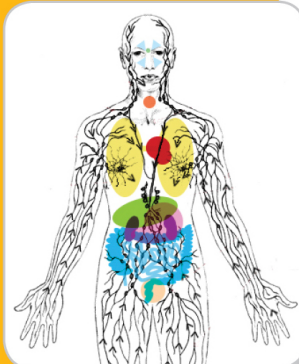
The clues

I was not at all surprised that Ryan had repetitive ear infections as a baby and toddler, or that he seemed to have his symptoms return in such a short time after antibiotics. The ear infections are actually a sign in babies of overworked kidneys. When the kidneys are compromised, it then puts further pressure on the digestive system to take on some of the work. In a young child / baby with an immature digestive system, we find often the acidic lymph fluid backs up in the ears. When the lymphatic system slows down or becomes stagnant the sinuses often become congested. In regards to Ryan's sinus congestion, I would refer you back to my article on Seasonal Allergies. The body will use the sinus cavity as an emergency elimination route when the bowels and kidneys are compromised in any way. Basically, what is consumed during the day that isn't either digested or eliminated will show up as a stuffy nose in the morning.

Adding antibiotics that destroy gut flora to the mix only makes matters worse.

My job was twofold. First, to look for ways to make the job easier on Ryan's bowels through dietary changes and second, to support his kidneys and bowels so they could properly drain the mucus that was going up instead of down and out.

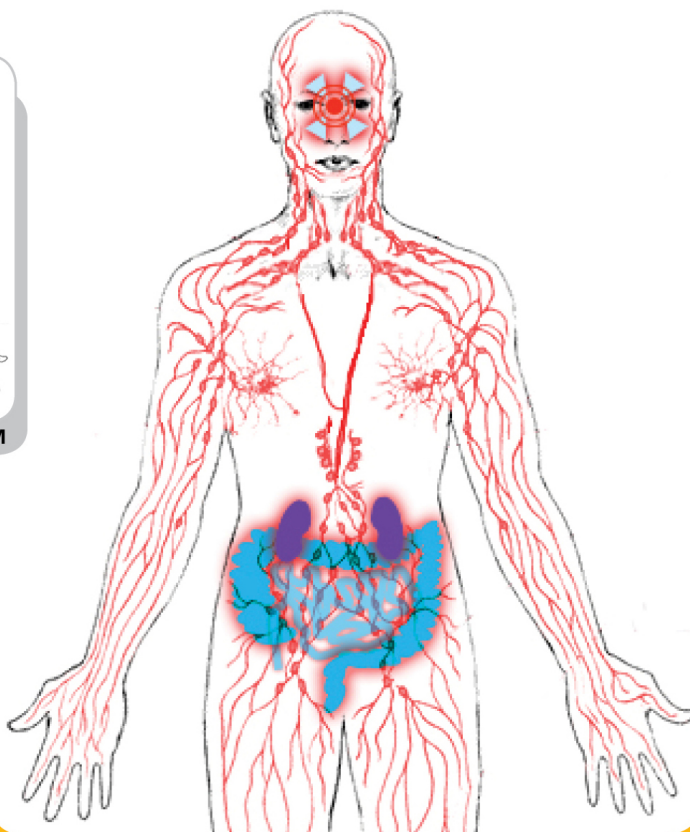
THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM: FREQUENT ENTs



A HEALTHY SYSTEM

The origin of frequent ENT's in children is in the kidneys and digestive tract. When a young child's kidneys are weakened and the digestive system has not yet matured, they cannot drain off the acids produced by the body and the drainage backs up and can settle in the ears. By supporting the kidneys rather

than treating the ear infection with antibiotics, the chronic condition can be cured. Sinus congestion is a sign the digestive tract is using the sinus cavity as an emergency elimination route from acids it cannot eliminate. The first steps in supporting the digestive tract is to lower acid producing foods in the diet and begin a gemmotherapy protocol to support the bowels. It is quite common for children who had frequent ear infections treated with antibiotics to then develop chronic sinus congestion and throat infections. This can, however, be avoided by treating the underlying cause from the start.



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What we did

Ryan was in an acute stage of a chronic condition of congested sinuses. When this is the case, the treatment can take a bit longer to act. We needed a protocol that would reduce the acute stuffiness and simultaneously shift a long-term pattern

of unhealthy elimination. While Ryan's mom was not quite onboard to make any dietary changes, she was happy to begin the gemmotherapy protocols I suggested.

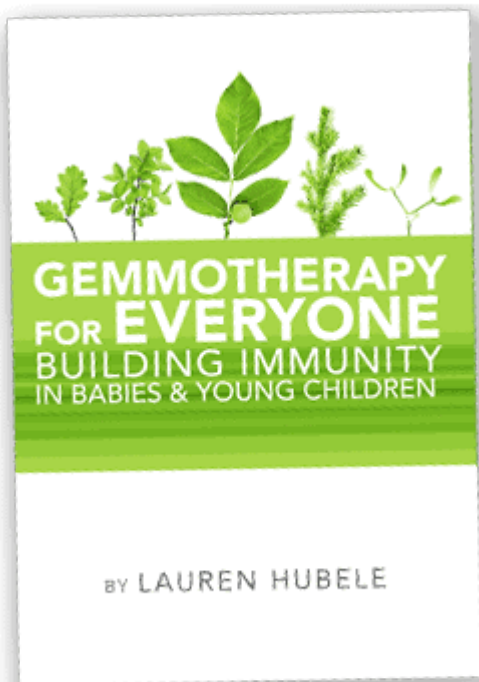
Ryan began taking a combination of three gemmos each morning that would support lymphatic drainage in his sinus cavity, decrease the inflammation and shrink mucus membranes. This same protocol also would boost his immune system and protect him from the secondary infections he was previously getting. In the evening he would take one gemmo after dinner that would support the healthy function of both bowels and kidneys.

Mom's response

When we began the gemmotherapy treatment, I honestly did not expect it to make any difference. In the beginning we did notice that Ryan didn't seem to be getting the sore throats any longer, but he did stay congested. Eventually his runny nose seemed to improve for periods of time, but you could still hear he was stuffed up. We continued on the gemmo protocol and actually did not need antibiotics the rest of that school year. Over the summer we went ahead and eliminated dairy products as a family just to see what would happen. While Ryan's nose did clear up I figured it was just because of the time of year, but here we are months into the school year and his stuffy nose has not returned. Of course it was a challenge at first to make the changes in our diet, but now we are rewarded with Ryan's improved health and it is now just what we do.

Next week I'll be diving in to how to boost your immune system during these cold, flu and allergy-prone winter months.

Stay well,



Gemmotherapy for Everyone: Building Immunity In Babies & Young Children

This book is full of easy to use Gemmotherapy protocols for everything from colic and sinus congestion to skin conditions and ear infections. An indispensable guide for anyone caring for young ones.

Buy the Book

Midweek Pause—Be

“Just as a clay Buddha cannot go through water and a

wood Buddha cannot go through fire, a goal-oriented healing practice cannot permeate deeply enough.”

– Darlene Cohen, “The Practice of Non-preference”

Consider: The magnitude of this message. It is a huge concept to absorb, especially when one is dealing directly with chronic pain or illness. Because we live in a goal oriented society, the verb that guides us is DO not BE. Our practice however calls for us to be and to accept that this is how it is today, whatever the circumstances may be. So when our present moment is filled with discomfort, whether that be physical or emotional, and the urge to DO arises, pause. Place your awareness on the experience of each of your senses (sight, touch, smell, sound, taste) and attempt to BE in that moment beyond the pain, realizing there IS more to that moment than pain.

Prepare: Shifting such a deeply ingrained response is hard work. Really hard work. What we want to do is allow the pain to be louder and greater than any other given experience and we are driven to DO something to fix it. Some days it will feel impossible. Remember each day is a new opportunity and the first step is to merely catch yourself and your response. Actually changing the response to pain can be supported by this 10 breath technique. Practice with it now recalling a recent emotionally painful experience or with physical pain you are experiencing, closing your eyes and counting each individual breath.

Do: This week, when a painful emotion or physical pain arises catch yourself in the instinctive reaction to DO and let that serve as a reminder to step into mindful breathing, allowing yourself to BE. Taking in all of the experiences that come with being, all you see, all you feel, all you smell, all you hear, all you taste.

Lauren's Kitchen: Vegan Caesar Salad



At my house we start every evening meal with a dinner-sized plate of raw salad. Many times the salad gets more rave reviews than the main course. I credit that to three things: toasted nuts and seeds, a hearty mix of greens, and the yummy dressings I prep ahead in quart jars in my fridge. Here's one of my favorites from Angela at Oh She Glows that is quite the crowd pleaser. If you're looking for more clean eating options, be sure to check out my Radically Simple Eating board on Pinterest.

Holiday Survival for Your Gut

Last week I shared the story of Maria who struggled daily with symptoms we have come to know as “irritable bowel.” Folks like Maria know well that the holiday spreads at the office and Aunt May’s are going to wreak havoc on their already sensitive digestion. So, short of doing a complete dietary overhaul in the midst of what tends to be one of the most stressful times of year, here are some practical tips and why they will work. I’ll be sure to come around in the New Year to help you overhaul that diet for good!

So, you have a string of parties to attend and you need a game plan? Here is a guide to support your bowels through all that holiday noshing.



1. Invest in these high quality probiotics now. Take 2 caps each morning through the season and on days you challenge your digestive tract, take 2 additional caps each evening. Supporting the good bacteria in your gut will help with digestion and bolster your immune system

which is compromised when consuming inflammatory foods.

2. Order both walnut and fig gemmotherapy extracts. Take a dose of 25 drops of Walnut before heading out for the party and 25 drops of Fig when you come home. The walnut will provide prevention against any food borne bacteria as well as protect your sensitive digestion and Fig will calm, soothe, and support the cleaning of your bowels.
3. Fill yourself with a healthy meal before heading out—if it is early in the day eat plenty of raw fruits or juice. If it is late in the day eat a raw veggie salad and/or a cooked veggie soup.
4. Bring a dish to share that you can eat and love!
5. Either commit to avoiding the food table completely or choose wisely—so what to eat? Look out for foods in their most natural state and lay off the processed chips, crackers, and factory produced spreads.
6. Don't be tempted to skip breakfast the next morning. This only causes further stagnation in your bowels. Instead, start your next day as clean as possible with a citrus based fresh squeezed fruit juice or smoothie, moving on to a green juice/green smoothie in the late morning or early afternoon. More is better as you are supporting your lymph to flush toxins from your system. End your day with a light, grain-free dinner such as a chopped veggie soup, miso broth and greens or raw veggie salad.
7. Bring on the next party!

Back to Maria's story with some further information for you to consider post holiday season. Of course she had looked at her diet multiple times and tried to notice what foods triggered what response, but she had not been successful. This is true for many people. The issue was that she did not know **what it was** about the foods she was eating that was aggravating her system. I'm going to simplify this here for those who suffer from any digestive woes: foods that fall in these two broad categories need to be reduced and, ultimately, eliminated:

1. Foods that cause inflammation (inflammatory foods)
– Here's a list of the top 12
2. Foods that increase acid – Here are 25 common acid forming foods

While there may be minor debates among thought leaders in the industry as to the specifics about what should be avoided and why, the idea of eliminating inflammatory and acid-causing foods is generally upheld. If you're looking for further information, these medical and nutritional experts have much to say: Dr. Frank Lipman, Dr. Mark Hyman, and T. Colin Campbell.

Let's talk about that diet overhaul in a few weeks!

Midweek Pause–Self Care

“If we do not know how to take care of ourselves and to love ourselves, we cannot take care of the people we love. Loving oneself is the foundation for loving another person.”

–Thich Nhat Hanh

Consider: What would our world be like if each person really took care of and truly loved themselves? What would your extended family be like if each individual member actually took care of and loved themselves? Today you have been given an opportunity to take steps to love and care for yourself. You alone taking this step will begin a ripple effect and impact countless others because your personal capacity to love and care for others multiplies.

Prepare: Close your eyes and imagine how just today alone might have gone differently if you had begun your morning

loving and caring for yourself. What need for self care did you ignore? Was it a physical need to move more slowly or did you need to build in time for some movement or exercise? What could you have said to yourself to care for your emotional state? What if you had given yourself 15 or even 5 minutes to spiritually connect through prayer or meditation? Now imagine how your interactions with others might have shifted as well.

Do: Upon first waking tomorrow morning and each morning after, affirm that you are love and can be love today. Ask what needs to be nurtured on this given day, listen to the response and attend to it. It need not be elaborate or long—just take care of yourself first. Remind yourself over and again until it is ingrained that by ignoring the care you need, you directly reduce your ability to care and be there for others.

The Root of Your Irritable Bowels

This is the third in my on-going “Root of the Problem” series. You can find all of them here [where I would love for you to leave your questions or comments.](#)

The Irritable Bowel Story:

Maria came to me for help with her nagging digestive disturbances. While the symptoms, to varying degree, had been present for years, a recent upsurge in their intensity pushed her to seek help. Cramping, bloating and acid reflux had just become a part of her daily life. While Maria had begun to see erratic bowel movements as “normal,” she was alarmed by the fact that recently she was faced with an extreme urination urgency and experienced explosive loose stools 2 to

3 times weekly.

On top of these challenges Maria had also started having difficulty falling asleep in recent months, usually needing well over an hour to settle into what would still be a restless night. Due to her compromised sleep and the dominant symptoms in her bowels, Maria felt increasingly irritable and was more than ready for a change.

The Clues:

While Maria saw each of these symptoms as problems to be addressed individually, I could see clear connections. The fact that she needed to relieve herself on such an urgent basis was a clear indicator to me that her body was having a difficult time with the overflow of acid. To flush it out of her system the bowels emptied rapidly because the kidneys had hit their limit. You can read about supporting those overtaxed kidneys here. Maria's difficulty falling asleep was an additional sign of this problem, as maintaining a highly acidic pH can cause restlessness. I knew that if we first directed our attention to her pH levels and reduced the state of acidosis overall that her bowels were required to eliminate, we would see improvement in her mood and sleep. So how would we shift her pH levels?

Expecting a complicated protocol for what felt like several disconnected symptoms, Maria was quite surprised by the protocol I laid out for her. Here are the two steps we took:

1. To calm, support and clean Maria's digestive system I suggested we begin with three gemmotherapy extracts. Two together each morning would calm her nervous system and support both her kidneys and bowels on the most gentle level. Then each evening she would take one that is most helpful for soothing and cleaning the digestive tract.

2. In order to support the shift in pH, I asked Maria stop her morning coffee and begin her day instead with a fresh fruit breakfast. Pouring coffee first thing each morning into a digestive tract that is already hyper-acidic is only counterproductive if we are trying to make a shift. Replacing that coffee with a big dose of fresh fruit actually provides a welcome alkaline flush helping to engage the lymphatic system after a long night which helps release the acidic wastes through her bowels and urinary tract.

Her Response:

Maria and I met two weeks into her gemmotherapy protocol and switch to all-fruit breakfasts. She admitted during our meeting that while she had been hopeful when leaving my office, she honestly was a bit skeptical. She did, however, comply and happily reported in the interim she had not had one urgent episode, her daily elimination normalized to two formed bowel movements and the cramping and bloating was completely gone.

While Maria was rightfully ecstatic, I knew that our work had just begun. We had moved Maria out of the acute state, but now we needed to do the tedious work of shifting her body's learned compensations and deeper chronic problem. Restoring a healthy elimination pattern allowed us to move on to the next steps in healing.

I asked Maria to share a bit of her experience and here is what she had to say:

Constant stomach discomfort, bloating and diarrhea for about 7 to 8 years impacted my quality of life. Living with constant discomfort also affected my mood and diet. The protocols with the drops and fruit were easy to start and stay with. My only challenge was retraining myself to eat breakfast every morning as I had stopped a long time ago.

Maria's struggle with her bowels is not uncommon. I see variations of this weekly in my practice. Sadly, many who deal with these symptoms come to believe they must live with them. Not only is that not true, it is risky. Allowing problems with the elimination organs to continue puts strain on the other organs and can also lead to high blood pressure, weight gain, diabetes, and autoimmune disorders.

The holiday season can be a tricky time to keep a regular and healthy diet, so be looking for this Friday's post for some practical tips on how to navigate it all.

Lauren's Kitchen: Lentil Shepherd's Pie



This recipe from Pure Ella is a delicious way to use up any of those leftover mashed potatoes from your Thanksgiving Day festivities. It's also delicious enough to warrant making the mashed potatoes for it specifically! It would be a welcome vegan addition to any office party or potluck as well. If you're looking for more clean eating options for the holidays (and beyond!), be sure to check out my Radically Simple Eating board on Pinterest.