

HERBS TO BOOST THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Our immune system is the body's defence system, made up of a network of cells, tissues, glands and organs (eg. thymus, tonsils, appendix, small intestine, lymph nodes, spleen, liver, white cells, enzymes, antibodies, hormones, beneficial bacteria....) that work together to protect the body against, harmful germs, bacteria, viruses, infectious organisms, fungi, foreign substances (eg. many man-made toxins, food additives) and other invaders, which may gain access to it. The immune system has to work around the clock, 24 hours a day, in 100's of different ways, doing its work, largely unnoticed. One thing, that causes us really notice our immune system is... when it fails, for some reason. We also notice it when it does something that has a side effect we can see or feel... **like** when you cut yourself... bacteria may enter the break in the skin and the area becomes inflamed... this inflammatory response may cause redness, heat, swelling and pain in the area of infection... all this is the work of the immune system; or a sore throat is an inflammatory response of the immune system going into battle against viruses; or, a mosquito bite that gets red and itchy, is a visible sign of the immune system at work; or daily we eat 100's of germs and most of these die in the saliva and acid of the stomach. Occasionally germs may get through and cause a belly-ache, vomiting, diarrhoea or food poisoning. Bacteria and other intruders can do many harmful things, multiplying very rapidly, causing damage in small or larger scale; some may paralyse our nerves, while others block the ability of the cells to carry on their normal function, and may disturb one of more bodily functions. Such intruders, inert or alive, are called **antigens**.

An antigen may be any germ or virus, undigested protein, or poisonous substance. Apart from antigens, any challenge to the body's well-being such as trauma of any kind, or stress – physical or emotional – will stimulate the immune system, whereupon standby white cells are released into circulation. Even brief bursts of physical activity have the effect of increasing the white blood cells count.

Apart from maintaining a constant state of warfare against intruders, the immune system as a normal activity will destroy cells of its own body if they become defective and no longer of any use. Red cells of the blood wear out after a period, variously estimated at from 6 to 17 weeks, and are continuously being replaced, and it is the ordinary task of the white cells to destroy the red cells as they become defective. Millions of red cells are destroyed and replaced every minute.

White cells are called leucocytes (2 basic types, called **phagocytes** and **lymphocytes**), which originate in bone marrow and migrate to inhabit every tissue and fluid of the body in great numbers. Some are very mobile, able to proceed quickly in the body fluids to anywhere they may be needed, while some remain more or less stationary in the tissues. They work in different ways, but at the same time co-operating together, to destroy anything potentially dangerous. **Phagocytes** destroy antigens of invading germs and viruses, by consuming and digesting them. Patrolling constantly in the blood and lymph fluid are the **B** and **T lymphocytes**. Not all lymphocytes circulate in the lymph and blood. The majority remain in reserves in the many nodes and glands of the lymphatic system, as well as the thymus, spleen, liver and other locations such as the tonsils and appendix.

The capability of the immune system depends upon the general state of health and physical fitness, but regardless of this, immuno-competence may be drastically reduced in a healthy body by fatigue or excessive stress. Other depressants of the immune system are drugs, such as nicotine, alcohol, tranquillisers, pain killers, electromagnetic radiation and many other substances like fluoride, chlorine and other chemicals and toxins of our 21st century. *Without the protection of the immune system, death from any number of infections would be swift and certain.*

The immune system is capable of recognising cancer cells in most tissues, most of the time. They do this constantly, as malignant cells frequently occur in our body. However, *if our immune system is suppressed, there is an increased risk of cancer*. Then, some people are better at handling cancer immunologically, than are others. Various tumors are much harder to detect than are others, & they could fool anyone's immune system. They may be very hard to kill as they either do not display 'telltale' surface antigens needed to excite our cancer killing cells, or they hide their antigens or suppress the immune system around the tumor-activating suppressor T cells. Cancer occurs when the process of orderly self-replication of cells is disturbed. Rogue genes are either activated spontaneously or by chemical, viruses or other extrinsic factors. If these activated genes, are not rapidly deactivated by immune functions, cell division may continue in an uncontrolled fashion, & a tumor will develop.

Cancer may lie dormant for many years, or be held in check by the immune system's response. But, when subjected to shock, excess worry, injury or grief, such people may rapidly develop cancer, when their immune system's responses become depleted. The mass of cancer cells can expand extremely rapidly, to crush local, normal cell tissue and the cancer cells can break down walls of blood and lymphatic vessels. Cancer cells may then be transplanted (metastasised) to different parts of the body, there to continue their deadly expansion. Vital organs can be damaged and the patient will die.

If cells have for one reason or another, embarked on a malignant course, then there is reason for lymphocytes to attack and destroy them. If they are, in their malignant state, even slightly different from self, then they should be killed. **Cancer... could then be at least partially blamed on an inefficient immune system.** Sunshine Coast Daily Newspaper, reported 26/8/06 that statistics in Australia show that 1 in 3 people are affected by cancer.

We need to recognise, that there may be many toxins, substances or influences which can contribute to the development first of pre-cancer and then to cancer. Cancer in humans has been separately correlated by numerous researchers, with each of the following factors.... oxygen deprivation of cells; constipation; high blood viscosity (sludged blood); lipotemia (high blood fat, cholesterol and other toxins which may include poisons from infected teeth and amalgam fillings); defective circulation; hormonal disturbances; excess body fat; high dietary fat, and protein diet; high sugar and sodium intake; high intake of alcohol, caffeine in chocolate, coffee, tea, and cola drinks; fluoridated and chlorinated water; aluminium cooking utensils; drugs (including medical drugs, sedatives, painkillers); various chemical carcinogens inhaled, eaten or absorbed through skin including nicotine, carbon monoxide; lack of sunshine; xrays and electromagnetic radiation; lack of exercise; consuming food deficient in vitamins, minerals and enzymes; stress – emotional or physical; and a high intake of processed and cooked foods. Our body is not designed for 'acid-forming processed and pseudo foods' and other examples of an unnatural lifestyle, we put it through on a consistent basis. Dr. Robert Young, author of 'The pH miracle: balance your diet, retain your health' says, "*When it comes to health, alkalinity is everything. When the body is in a healthy alkaline balance, toxic micro-organisms such as germs, bacteria, viruses, yeasts, are unable to take foothold (these micro-organisms thrive in an acid environment). Alkalinity maintains our inner electromagnetic conductivity. Electromagnetic current is what actually runs our body.*"

Health is so very precious. Without health, many components for a happy life are not possible. Herbs have been given to us for our health and healing and have many powerful properties to cleanse the body and strengthen the immune system. Herbs have electrical vibrations that harmonise with the electrical vibrations of our cells. **Fresh herbs are alkalising to the body, and have built in antibiotic, antibacterial, antiviral, tonic, digestive benefits and blood cleansing properties.**

Many herbs are strong **antioxidants** that can fight and kill free radicals (created in the body by some foods, cooking oils, preservatives, artificial colours, flavours and additives, environmental toxins and also metabolic body functions). Progress in antioxidant technology has led researchers to the belief that many signs of ageing result from the damage caused by free radicals. Fresh herbs and many edible plants are a rich source of antioxidants, or aid antioxidant actions – as... vitamin A (beta-carotene), C, E, & minerals zinc, selenium, vanadium, & several herbs have germanium. Herbs also contain many other antioxidant properties (eg. polyphenols, flavanols, benziso thio-cynate, curcumin, coenzyme Q10) which can help to build strong defences against cardio-vascular diseases such as stroke and heart attacks, help rejuvenate, cells and increase protection from cancer.

The following herbs... are valuable to grow and use regularly, for their cleansing and antioxidant action, tonic properties and to strengthen the immune system... herb robert, sheep sorrel, watercress, gotu kola, fenugreek, brahmi, sensitive plant, purslane, leaf ginseng, Ind. ginseng, sage, chia, king of bitters, nettle, garlic, licorice, St. John's wort, echinacea, asparagus, turmeric, oregano, yerba mate, horseradish, St. Marys thistle, mullein, menthol, goji, aloe (particularly candelabra which has a high 'Aloctin A' content found to stimulate biological functions and strengthen the immune system); a valuable anti-viral herb is licorice; **use culinary herbs for flavouring regularly** to aid the digestion; **and herbs that have antibiotic - probiotic action** which helps to boost the immune system: nasturtiums, ginger, toothache plant and also kefir; **lots of chlorophyll-rich greens** eg. rocket, parsley, comfrey, chicory, dandelion, Lebanese cress) as greens are blood cleansers and cell oxygenators...**the darker green the leaves, the higher the number of cancer-fighting nutrients they contain**, see book, 'How can I use herbs in my daily life?' the 5 Systems diagram page 12 or 14, that green foods strengthen the immune system; **potassium rich plants** like salad mallow, sweet leaf bush, sweet fruit root (as potassium foods help to alkalisate the body). **Sprouts are alkalising** to the body and also benefit the immune system by providing lots of **living enzymes**. Lack of enzymes in the body can contribute to poor digestion, pain, disease, poor immune response and premature ageing. Fenugreek seed grown as sprouts are so valuable, as they help to cleanse the lymphatic system. Note too: the body needs 2-2 1/2 litres of water daily, for the body to work well. For more details of herbs and of sprouts, refer to books... 'How can I use herbs in my daily life?' and 'How can I grow and use sprouts as living food?'

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