



Dr. Lynn Shumake
Compounding Pharmacist
Plant Medicines Expert
Certified Nutrition

Lyme Disease Winter Immunity and Nutrition Plan

Traditionally, the "cold & flu season" has been defined as that time of the year when the temperature drops and illness somehow rears its uncomfortable, inconvenient and potentially dangerous head. These illnesses include the common cold, influenza viruses, and upper respiratory tract infections.

A more accurate and comprehensive outline of the cold & flu season would be the time of year that includes decreased water consumption, poorer nutrition, increased stress from holidays, and decreased sun exposure. These factors can be associated with reduced perspiration when the temperature cools, a dramatic increase in holiday meals, stress, and minimal daylight hours. By planning for these changes in our environment, we can implement a prevention program to minimize these stressors to the immune system, and decrease the potential for Lyme symptoms.

Prevention Strategies

Hydration - maintain and increase your water consumption.

Even though we typically aren't perspiring as much in the winter, humidity levels and indoor heating systems continue to dry out the body. Dehydrated mucous membranes are a perfect conduit for viruses.

Sugar - refined sugars directly inhibit white blood cell production. These blood cells are an important line of defense in our immune system. Dramatically reduce, or avoid foods that are loaded with refined sugars. These include: baked goods, candies, soft drinks, etc.

Anti-inflammatory food - healthy foods are usually anti-inflammatory. Vegetables, fruit, fish, and raw tree nuts are good staples. Foods that promote inflammation and exacerbate symptoms are heavy in refined sugars, refined carbohydrates, and seed oils.

Stress - maintain exercise, meditation, and other forms of healthy relaxation. These practices help reduce stress as well as reduce inflammation.

Sun Exposure - try to spend as much time as possible in the available winter sun. Sun lamps have also been shown to be helpful.

Nutritional & Herbal Supplements

Nutritional and herbal supplements can play an effective role in optimizing your diet, preventing infections and minimizing inflammation. The fundamental nutritional supplements I recommend are a quality multi-vitamin, vitamin-D, omega-3 (fish oil) and magnesium. These four not only address the major deficiencies typically found in the modern diet but they also provide the foundation for a more anti-inflammatory diet. Additionally, vitamin-D levels in particular drop dramatically in the winter due to lack of sun exposure. Herbal/botanicals that I recommend for bolstering immunity and treating seasonal infections include; Echinacea, goldenseal, and oriental mushrooms. An additional food and supplement I've recently come to appreciate is coconut oil and coconut oil capsules. Coconut oil naturally contains fatty acids similar to those found in breast milk which is the source of immune enhancing nutrients for infants.

Managing inflammation is an important part of managing Lyme symptoms. It is also often overlooked in managing cold and flu symptoms. For managing any type of acute or chronic inflammation, I recommend these botanicals that are safe and effective: tumeric/curcumin, ginger, boswellia, devil's claw, quercetin, and cat's claw. These happen to be equally effective in Lyme conditions.

Holistic Prevention & Treatment

Staying healthy, preventing and managing colds, influenza and upper respiratory tract infections can be challenging for someone managing Lyme symptoms. Be prepared by developing a comprehensive approach that includes strategic nutrition, nutritional supplementation, and physical/psychological planning. Navigating the winter season should be a healthy and comfortable experience.

Dr. Lynn Shumake combines 40 years of pharmacy, custom medications, herbal/botanical medicine and nutritional supplements experience in his work with Lyme patients.

Dr. Shumake, himself, has Lyme disease.