

Autumn 2009

KID'S ISSUE | Winter Immunity | Zinc & Vit A | Did you know?

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- A lot of the **immune strengthening** properties of garlic are lost by heat – try adding crushed garlic to meals at end of cooking.
- **Echinacea** is significantly effective in reducing cold symptoms in children and adults.
- **Dehydrated mucus membranes** are more prone to infection. Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids in winter-time since they often don't have much thirst. Utilise a humidifier for helping moisten your child's respiratory tract to assist better drainage.
- Babies born by **Caesarean** have a different mix of intestinal bacteria compared with vaginally born babies. This predisposes C-section babies to more gastro, infections and allergies; however a unique probiotic called *Bifidus infantalis* can be given from birth to help reduce these risks.

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With winter upon us and respiratory infections on the rise (this will be a tough winter for infections, with 30% of Australia getting one or more viral infection), strengthening children's immune systems can help them fight off the various organisms they are bound to come in contact with.

What weakens a child's immune system?

- Constant exposure to food & environmental allergens
- Long term use of antibiotics and cortisone-based medications
- Diets high in processed food, sugar, colours & preservatives
- Lack of quality sleep
- Family history – some children are inherently more prone to respiratory weakness
- Constant contact with different organisms at day care / school



How do I boost my child's immunity?

Ensure your child is getting adequate sleep, fresh air, regular exercise, drinks water regularly throughout the day and has a healthy diet. **Try to encourage:**

- A variety of wholegrains – experiment with non-wheat based pastas, millet, brown rice.
- A variety of fruits and vegetables – different colours (especially bright orange and red) and not the same ones every day – try grating vegies into meals or using veges in muffins.
- A variety of protein twice daily, which is particularly important for the development of a healthy immune system – eggs, legumes, nuts, seeds, fish, chicken and meat.
- Healthy fats from avocados, nuts, seeds, fish and olive oil.



Zinc & Vitamin A

Zinc has many roles in the body, including playing a crucial part in a healthy immune system function. Zinc deficiency signs include poor wound healing, picky eating and white spots on fingernails. A simple zinc taste test can be performed during a consultation to provide further evidence of a suspected zinc deficiency. It is important to be guided by your naturopath with regard to dosage & duration of supplementation.

Unfortunately a huge percentage of zinc is lost in food processing and if a child also has low vitamin A levels they will not use their zinc properly. Oysters are well known for being high in zinc but just in case your child is not into oysters for some reason, other sources include **beef, wholegrains, lamb, eggs, sunflower and pumpkins seeds!** Sources of vitamin A/beta-carotene are all orange and green vegetables, liver and cod liver oil. **Vitamin A** is essential for mucus membrane immunity – the perfect partner for zinc.

Supplementation with various herbs and nutrients can be very effective in improving the immune system response.