

THE ULTIMATELY COOLEST WAY TO RAISE YOUR KIDS IN THE NEW ERA

GEEK PARENTING

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MOTHER NATURE

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COLDS &
FLU

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**PLUS
MORE!**





THE NATURAL EIGHT

How to use Mother Nature's finest to deal with common colds and flu...

By Sara Jackson

I find with my own children and lots of people around me, that it's virtually impossible to completely avoid all the germs that do the rounds in the playground, no matter how much you try. Especially at this time of the year, I'm often being asked how to deal with and prevent colds and viruses. Who wants to let a nasty bug ruin the holiday season for your family?

So the first thing to look at is the immune system and some sure-fire natural ways to boost our body's natural system of special cells, proteins, tissues and organs put in place to protect us. With the first sign that my kids are fighting off a virus, I ramp up immune boosting foods, drinks, remedies and supplements.

Here's my top tips to try the next time your little one is under the weather...





1. Probiotic foods, drinks and supplements

Good bacteria in the gut is the key to optimal immune function. A weakened immune system is usually the first sign of an imbalance in our digestive tract. Ancient probiotic rich drinks like the fermented tea drink kombucha or kefir water are easy kid-friendly ways of reintroducing beneficial bacteria.

My kids think fizzy kombucha is a real treat - you can make it yourself, or if you're low on time, most good health food stores stock bottles of ready made, that you can flavour with fruit or herbs.

Fermented foods which have been used in almost every global culture for centuries are made via lacto-fermentation, a method of food preservation to increase the nutrient quality of foods. The action of the

bacteria goes straight to boost the 'good guys' in your gut in a way that is easily absorbable.

Sauerkraut, fermented carrot sticks and other fermented veggies are easily accessible sources you should try to include in your daily routine. You can pick these up in the fridge at your health food store, but look out for raw, organic and unpasteurised products to reap the full benefits.

If you have picky young taste buds to contend with, try a course of age-appropriate probiotic supplements, but definitely steer clear of so called 'yoghurt probiotic drinks' - (you know the ones with red labels!) - they're high in sugar and aren't the real deal.

2. Increase natural antibiotics

There is no doubt about it - antibiotics have their place and can be life saving but they are being severely overused. It's a fact. By the time our children reach 30, we know on average they have had 30 rounds of antibiotics. Since each course lasts between 7-14 days, that means they've spent potentially 300 days or nearly a whole year of their young lives - on antibiotics.

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There is much confusion in the press about them but to put it simply, we've learnt three major lessons from their overuse. Firstly antibiotic reactions are common; infact they're the most common cause of drug reactions in kids under 18. Secondly, antibiotic resistance poses a massive global threat. In the US

alone, about 2 million people have serious infections with bacteria that are now resistant to the antibiotics we know and use, and as a consequence, about 23,000 people die each year because of antibiotic resistance. Thirdly, antibiotics cause chronic disease as they kill off all the good bacteria when they attack the bad guys.

It has been proven that when we give antibiotics to children at a young age or enough times, some of the beneficial bacteria may never recover and there is permanent damage left to the immune system as a result. We know that a damaged gut flora raises the risk of developing conditions from asthma, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, obesity, depression, anxiety and diabetes and most likely a ton more.

So please consider whether or not your child really needs them before picking up that script at the pharmacy. Here are some fabulous natural herbs that can be used to treat both bacterial and viral infections...



3. Echinacea

Echinacea definitely works to prevent colds and reducing their recurrence and lessening the length and severity of a cold. Take the drops with water 4-5 times a day on acute symptoms or at the very start of a cold.

4. Elderberry

Elderberry has been shown to be very effective as a flu treatment. It works best when started within 2 days of the symptoms starting. It's super high in antioxidants and has powerful anti-viral, anti-inflammatory actions. A syrup is easy going for kids to take - a typical dosage for flu treatment is 1 tspn three times daily for adults and 1 tspn three times daily for children. You can add it to water or juice.

5. Garlic and Ginger

Garlic and Ginger are nature's gift to our immune system with their multi-tasking natural antibiotic, anti-fungal, anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory properties. Raw garlic and raw ginger have the best healing benefits but if your kids are like mine, it's an impossible challenge to expect them to take these raw. So add lots of extra garlic to your cooking, especially in bone broth based soups and stews.

You could ramp up the ginger in fresh green juices or smoothies which would also give you a nice nutrient boost. Or grate a teaspoon of ginger root into hot water, steep for 5 mins then strain the ginger, add fresh squeezed lemon and raw/manuka honey to taste, let it cool down & instantly soothe their symptoms.

6. Bone Broth

There has been a resurgence in the kind of bone based stocks that our grandparents traditionally made and ate regularly. There is a very good reason why they are so fashionable again. This home made broth is truly like liquid gold for your immunity - it will nourish and restore the gut lining, replenish good bacteria, improve immunity, digestion and increase nutrient absorption. We now know that 80% of our immunity lies in the digestive tract, so it's crucial that we take care of it as our health literally depends on it. You need to use grass fed/organic animal bones otherwise you will be taking on board the antibiotics, growth hormones and other chemicals that the animal may have been given. Check out www.hemsleyandhemsley.com for easy recipes and how to incorporate it into everyday cooking. Consume as much as you can during illness, but try to take it often to maintain optimal health. . . ➤

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7. Epsom Salt Baths

Another fabulous multi tasker...they reduce inflammation while increasing immune function, improving absorption of nutrients and help encourage good sleep.

Why have you not tried these before, right? What to do....run a warm-hot deep bath then mix half a mug of epsom salts with 1 tbspn of coconut or olive oil and some essential oil - 2 drops of lavender, peppermint or eucalyptus is nice. Add the mixture to the bath and let

your little one soak for up to 20 mins. Try not to use any soap or products in this bath as the epsom salts may open up the pores so you don't want them to absorb the chemicals contained in the soap or bath gel.

You can do these baths weekly on a regular basis but they're effective taken a few times a week during an acute illness. Make sure to drink plenty of water before and after an epsom salt bath.



8. Rest, rest, rest

When your little one is feeling poorly, let them rest as much as possible. Not only because sleep is how the body repairs and heals, but also to stop them from infecting everyone else around them.

How many times have you wished that the snotty kid at school would have stayed home, rather than contaminating the entire class? I know its not always easy to take time off work to look after them, but with plenty of rest, children will recover much faster and prevent a recurrence and taking everyone else in the

family down with them. Keep them very well hydrated from their sick bed...

I hope you'll give some of these natural remedies a try and think twice before going straight for the over the counter products or antibiotics as I think mother nature has provided us with some amazing medicines. I always love to hear your thoughts, what you want to learn more about or need help with in your own families, so please do get in touch! of water before and after an epsom salt bath.



About the author

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