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How You Can Support Your Immune System

By Maoshing Ni, D.O.M., Ph.D., L.Ac.

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Media coverage of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) has incited fear among the American public, emptied Chinatowns all over North America and stopped much of the travel between the U.S., Toronto, Canada, China, Taiwan and southeast Asia. While SARS is an urgent concern for the World Health Organization, a larger worry on the horizon for the world health agency is the flu—the long awaited influenza pandemic.

The flu pandemic has historically occurred at 25–30 year intervals and its destruction has been cataclysmic. The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, for example, killed more than 40 million people worldwide (670,000 Americans alone). The most recent flu pandemic struck 35 years ago and killed more than 4 million people. SARS, by comparison, has caused less than one thousand deaths and is much less infectious. Dr. Klaus Stohr, the head of the influenza program at the World Health Organization who is also leading the agency's fight against SARS said in a Wall Street Journal interview, "We are not prepared for the devastation of a flu pandemic... SARS will be something to smile about," he said.

Regarding the likelihood of a major flu pandemic striking in the near future, Albert Osterhaus, a Dutch scientist involved in pandemic preparedness in Europe said in the same Wall Street article, "It's not a matter of if, but when, this will happen. I am far more scared of a flu pandemic than I am of SARS." The flu, SARS and other communicable diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis are the twenty-first century's major health challenges.

Overcrowding and global travel have increased the risk of diseases spreading unchecked. However, the real threat lies in a virus's ability to undergo small changes or mutations that evade people's natural immunities or commercial vaccinations. Similarly, the widespread use of antibiotics in poultry and meat producing industries has enabled bacteria to become stronger and more resistant. According to some critics, even our current medical practices of over-prescribing antibiotics may contribute to the rise of "super-bugs"!

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When these "new" microbes strike, they move quickly and wipe out victims, leaving a wide path of destruction. The West Nile and Ebola viruses, for example, both have at least a 90% mortality rate.

Don't panic. You can prevent or minimize your chance of contracting infectious diseases both at home or while traveling. Some of my recommendations are common sense:

- Wash your hands frequently
- Avoid touching your face
- Eat well-cooked foods
- Maintain a distance from someone who is sick
- Avoid crowded and poor ventilated places

Sometimes you cannot help but travel on airplanes, meet with someone who may appear to be sick,

eat out at a restaurant or be in a crowded place. Therefore you must make sure that your immune system is functioning at a peak level. This involves avoiding activities that would weaken or deplete your immune system and engage in immune strengthening and supporting actions. Below I have outlined a checklist of things to avoid:

- Stress and negative emotions
- Sleep deprivation
- Overwork and over-exhaustion
- Diet high in sugar, caffeine and refined products
- Under or over-exercise
- Frequent use of antibiotics, steroids or immuno-suppressant drugs

Many people who were exposed to SARS, Ebola, the West Nile virus or the flu virus never came down with the infection. The reason is simple: Their immune systems are much stronger and better equipped to fend off the viruses than those who came down with the illnesses. I have outlined below actions to strengthen your immune system:

- Reduce stress and maintain equanimity
- Get plenty of rest and sleep
- Pace yourself at work and in your life
- Eat a healthy diet consisting of high fiber, low fat and at least nine servings of vegetables and fruits each day
- Moderate daily exercise including cardiovascular and light weight training
- Avoid drugs and chemicals whenever possible
- Take herbs and vitamins that have been shown to optimizing the immune system

Extensive studies of ways to strengthen the human defenses have been carried out for centuries in China, producing a wealth of knowledge on Chinese herbal medicine and its effect on the immune system. While there is currently no cure for SARS, the Chinese Government Health Authority recently released its recommendations for preventing SARS. These recommendations consist of Chinese herbal medicine formulations as prophylactic agents against SARS. They are herbs that have been

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found to contain anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties and have immune boosting qualities. Some are effective in increasing the white blood cell production in your body (they are your defense troops), while others increase lymphocyte activities such as killing foreign invaders, etc. Fundamental principles of Chinese medicine are, of course, "Treating disease before its occurrence", and "Strengthen the defenses to prevent sickness."

The recommendations are listed below:

Lu Gen (reed root), Jin Yin Hua (honeysuckle flower), Lian Qiao (forsythia fruit), Chan Yi (cicada shell), Jiang Chan (silkworm), Bo He (peppermint), Gan Cao (licorice)

Cang Zhu (Chinese atractylodes rhizome), Bai Zhu (white atractylodes rhizome), Huang Qi (astragalus root), Fang Feng (siler root), Huo Xiang (patchouli), Sha Sheng (silver beech root), Jin Yin Hua (honeysuckle flower), Guan Zhong (dryopteris root)

Guan Zhong (dryopteris root), Jin Yin Hua (honeysuckle flower), Lian Qiao (forsythia fruit), Da Qing Ye (Isatis leaf), Zi Su (perilla leaf), Ge gen (Kudzu root), Huo Xiang (patchouli), Cang Zhu (Chinese atractylodes rhizome), Pei Lan (ornamental orchid), Tai Zi Sheng (pseudostellaria root)

Persons whose jobs (health workers) or relations may bring them into contact with someone with potential SARS are advised to take the following formula:

Da Huang (Chinese rhubarb root), Jin Yin Hua (honeysuckle flower), Chai Hu (bupleuri root), Huang Qing (skullcap root), Ban Lan Gen (Isatis root), Guan Zhong (dryopteris root), Cang Shu, Yi Yi Ren (Job's tears), Huo Xiang (patchouli), Fang Feng (siler root), Gan Cao (licorice)

We cannot rely on the government or a world health body to protect us from communicable diseases, nor should we. In a world grown ever more connected and fast-paced, the risks of disease transmission are greater with each passing day. However, individuals have the ability to protect themselves and loved ones by being proactive in ensuring optimal health and immune function. As frightening as the prospects of SARS and the flu pandemic are, we are far from being helpless. With the steps that I outlined above you can take minimize weakening your immune system and increase your immune functions. You do not have to be a sitting duck waiting for the inevitable to happen.

Dr. Maoshing Ni, a Licensed Acupuncturist and a Diplomat of Chinese Herbology, is currently in general practice at the Tao of Wellness Clinic in Santa Monica, California. The Tao of Wellness Clinic is one of the oldest in Los Angeles, established in 1976. (310) 917-2200. Dr. Maoshing Ni is also the publisher of Points Newsletter, found at

IS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM TRASHED?

By Stacey Kumagai

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Contact: Stacey Kumagai at
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IS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM TRASHED?

FOUR MOUNTAINS, INC. UNVEILS 21st CENTURY SOLUTIONS FOR CORRECTING IMMUNE DYSFUNCTION

ULTIMATELY TAKING THE `SCARE' OUT OF SARS AND INFECTION OUT OF THE MODERN WORLD

Calabasas, CA - Information is power. So is a strong immune system. Over the past few decades, fear and helplessness has been the focus of the common cold/flu, Swine Flu, E-coli bacteria, HIV/AIDS and most recently SARS. Four Mountains, Inc., is a privately held Clinical & Research Laboratory dedicated to synthesizing all available data in the fields of alternative medicine, disease prevention, wholistic mind/body health and anti-aging technology. And they are unveiling what is likely the most advanced, comprehensive, wholistic, and effective Immune Support Program in the world.

"Some doctors are telling the public that the immune system cannot be strengthened and there is nothing we can do to increase resistance to infections, but these old fashioned opinions do not square with the

evidence. The human immune system CAN be augmented and amplified! One vitamin or herb won't do it alone, that's true. But, if you supply the immune system with all the hundreds of nutritive materials it needs to function then YES, THE BODY CAN DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST INFECTIONS OF ALL TYPES. A strong immune system protects the body against alien microbes, and SARS is no exception," states Dr. Ward Coleman, N.D. and President of Four Mountains, Inc. "There is no excuse for so much widespread illness and fear of illness. If you get sick, it means your immune system is handicapped, depleted and depressed. I want people to know that all illness and infection is ABNORMAL and CAN be prevented. The way we live, the nutrients we ingest (or fail to), determines how immune we are to infection. Too many people are not understanding this. We don't need any more studies. We already know more than is being applied. If we apply what we already know, illness and disease will vanish from the face of the earth!" explains Coleman.

Four Mountains Immune Support Program is a complete wellness program consisting of special immunity boosting nutrients and dietary guidelines designed to work as an applied maintenance life system program for continuous optimized health.

For media information requests, contact Stacey Kumagai at 818/506-8675 or mediamonster@yahoo.com . To order the Immune Support Program call Four Mountains, Inc., at 800/736-0904 or email fourmountains@earthlink.net

Stacey Kumagai is CEO of Media Monster Communications, Inc. – a full-service public relations, marketing, media firm specializing in business development, special event production and creative

consulting.

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