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Newsletter

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Give Yourself an Immunity Boost

Can't shake that cold or flu? Stress, lifestyle habits and structural imbalances may be spoiling your body's ability to fight infection or illness. Give yourself an all-natural immunity boost by learning the warning signs of disease and ways to build your resistance.

You have two types of immunity – innate and acquired. Innate immunity comprises white blood cells, stomach acid, skin resistance (such as the natural oil that covers the skin to keep invaders out) and various chemicals in the bloodstream. This immunity is automatic and normally takes care of small invaders. Acquired immunity offers more serious protection. It's like an army of Pac-Man "T cells" ("T" from the thymus gland) and "B cells" (from bone marrow) that consume whatever they are programmed to destroy.

Nerve impulses communicate to the immune system the need for an immune response. When an invader enters your body, the first response is a nervous system signal. However, if spinal vertebrae are misaligned and pinching on a nerve, messages to the immune system may be impaired, and the immune system will not respond correctly.

By the time discomfort occurs, the immune system has already been breached. However, the diseased condition initially may have manifested as sleeping problems, food cravings, irritability, fatigue or joint pains – which many people dismiss as "normal." Maintaining a strong immune system is essential for your long-term well-being. With a better understanding of that precious system and what interferes with it, you can make the lifestyle choices and decisions to enhance it – and the rest of your life. Talk to your chiropractor for more information.

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Stressed By School

The presence of the stress hormone -- cortisol -- in kindergartners shows starting school may be stressful long before school begins, a study says. To the researchers' surprise, the data gathered on 105 children showed that far from providing a baseline, cortisol levels were already high three to six months before school started. Lead researcher Julie Turner-Cobb of the University of Bath wonders if parental stress about their children starting school is being passed on to the children. The study, published in the Economic and Social Research Council's Society Today, also found children with a more shy, fearful personality appeared less stressed than their more extrovert peers and children with higher levels of cortisol throughout the day when starting school actually had fewer sick days. Stress levels lowered significantly after six months, suggesting most children adapt well to school. A few children still had high cortisol levels throughout the day at follow-up, indicating that they were experiencing a more long-term stress response that Turner-Cobb suggests could lead to poorer health. Turner-Cobb observed these children were more extroverted but had also become increasingly socially isolated during the study -- perhaps because their peers had lost patience with their exuberance.

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What is Over-Learned is Often Forgotten

U.S. researchers said over-learning -- studying material immediately after it has been mastered -- doesn't help embed the new memory for the long haul. The study, published in Current Directions in Psychological Science, concluded that cramming all the study on a single topic into a single session reduces long-term retention. University of South Florida psychologist Doug Rohrer and Hal Pashler of the University of California, San Diego, had two groups of students study new vocabulary in different ways. One group ran through the list five times; these students got a perfect score no more than once. The others kept drilling, for a total of 10 trials; with this extra effort, the students had at least three perfect run-throughs. Then the psychologists tested all the students, some one week later and others four weeks later. For students who took the test a week later, those who had done the extra drilling performed better, however, this benefit of over learning completely disappeared after four weeks. In other words, if students are interested in learning that lasts, that extra effort is really a waste. They should instead spend this time looking at material from last week or last month or even last year, Rohrer and Pashler suggest.

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Taking Break While Exercising Helps Diet

A Japanese study showed taking a break in the middle of an exercise workout may metabolize more fat than exercising without stopping. The study, published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, compared one single 60-minute bout of exercise to two bouts of 30-minute exercise divided by a 20-minute rest. "Many people believe prolonged exercise will be optimal in order to reduce body fat, but our study has shown that repetitions of shorter exercise may cause enhancements of fat mobilization and utilization during and after the exercise," lead researcher Kazushige Goto of the University of Tokyo, said in a statement. Seven healthy, physically active men with an average age of 25 exercised on a cycling machine and rested in chairs. Their respiratory gas and heart rates were monitored continuously. Trials with the break showed a greater amount of lipolysis -- fat breakdown -- than did the no-break trials. The trial with the break also had a pronounced increase in the final 15 minutes of exercise of free fatty acids and glycerol -- chemical compounds released when stored fat is used, the study said.

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Football Top Cause of High School Injuries

Football, one of the most popular U.S. sports, is the leading cause of high school sports injuries, said a Columbus Children's Hospital study. During the 2005-06 season, high school football players sustained more than 500,000 injuries nationally, according to researchers at Columbus Children's Hospital. The study, published in the August issue of *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*, found four out of every 1,000 high school football exposures resulted in an injury, while eight out of every 1,000 collegiate football exposures resulted in an injury.

Although National Collegiate Athletic Association football players were twice as likely to sustain an injury as high school football players, high school football players sustained a greater proportion of season-ending injuries, fractures and concussions compared with collegiate football players. "While football does have a high rate of injuries, injuries don't have to be just part of the game," study co-author Christy Collins said in a statement. "There are ways to reduce the number and severity of football injuries through targeted interventions. Because we observed high levels of ankle and knee injuries, we recommend increased conditioning of ankles and knees and rule changes aimed at protecting these vulnerable body sites."

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Apologizing May Be Key to Saving Marriage

Married adults are twice as likely as single, divorced or separated people to apologize to mates, even if they feel they are blameless, a U.S. survey found. This willingness to apologize may be key to a lasting marriage, suggests the survey of 7,590 U.S. adults by pollsters Zogby International for The Pearl Outlet.com.

The survey found 64 percent of married people, and 67 percent of those in civil unions, said they apologize first even if they feel they are only partially to blame in an argument with their significant other. That compared to 40 percent of single people, and 42 percent of divorced, separated or widowed people. "The secret of a lasting marriage is being prepared to accept that the other person has an equally valid viewpoint and therefore being willing to apologize, because you love them and want them to be happy," said Andrew Marshall, author of "I Love You But I'm Not IN Love With You." The poll has a margin of error of 1.1%.

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Yoga Effective in Lowering Blood Pressure

A U.S. review of 12 published randomized trials found favorable effects of mind-body therapies on blood pressure -- with yoga the most beneficial. Ather Ali, Dr. David L. Katz and Michael B. Bracken of Yale University conducted a systematic review to assess the efficacy of mind-body therapies -- mediation, yoga and visualization -- versus placebo or active control in the treatment of hypertension. The review found mind-body therapies significantly reduced systolic blood pressure by a mean 11.52 mm Hg and diastolic blood pressure by 6.83 mm Hg. Significant results were seen in systolic blood pressure reductions by yoga and meditation therapy, while only yoga therapies demonstrated significant reductions in diastolic blood pressure. "This review shows that there is some high quality scientific literature supporting the use of mind-body therapies as a treatment for hypertension, and the magnitude of effect is clinically significant," Ali said in a statement.

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Most Adults Eat Too Much Salt

Reducing salt in the diet is always a good idea because too much salt results in hypertension, or high blood pressure, say U.S. researchers.

Ninety percent of U.S. adults will develop hypertension unless they take steps to prevent it, but a study earlier this year found that people who cut back on the amount of salt in their diets by 25 percent to 35 percent could reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease by as much as 25 percent and lower their mortality rates by 20 percent, according to Amy Schnabel, a clinical nutrition manager at the University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center.

“The biggest misconception about sodium intake is that many people think that, by removing the salt shaker from the dinner table, they aren’t eating salt, but some 80 percent of dietary sodium comes from eating out and from packaged and processed foods,” Schnabel said in a statement. For example, one cup of canned soup can contain more than 50 percent of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s recommended allowance of 2,400 mg a day, and a serving of lasagna at a restaurant can put a person over his or her sodium allowance in one meal. The average U.S. adult consumes 4,000 to 6,000 milligrams of salt per day.

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Elderly More Prudent Drivers Than Thought

Society’s perception of older drivers tends to be negative, but surveys say 80 percent of the elderly show prudent driving behavior, says Desmond O’Neill and colleagues at the Trinity Centre for Health Sciences, Adelaide and Meath Hospital, in Dublin, Ireland. Risk of crashes in patients with dementia is acceptably low for up to three years after diagnosis, according to a study published in the British Medical Journal. In addition, stopping driving can limit access to family, friends and services. Social isolation is an independent risk factor for entry into a nursing home, according to O’Neill. The study authors suggest that the main thrust of future measures to protect public safety should focus on opportunistic screening of high risk populations, such as those attending specialist memory clinics, and the refinement of effective pathways for clinicians and the licensing agency to manage mobility and safety.

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