

Nurse's Notes Vol. 2

by Marie Angell Habershaw BSN, RN



This week we have seen many changes in our day to day lives. We have decreased the numbers of people we can interact with daily to five, and we have tightened up the social distancing requirements. Nationally, we have seen an increase in COVID-19 cases across the board. We have also seen examples of incredible kindness and support from people, which is truly heartwarming.

For many of us the stress of these new changes can seem overwhelming. It is well documented that stress can negatively impact our health. One way to combat the effects of stress is to boost our body's **immune system**.

There is only so much we can do to control this situation. We can follow the directions we are given: wash our hands often, stay out of groups of more than five people, stay home as much as possible, etc. Most importantly, we need to be fortifying our immune systems. To do this we need to manage our stress. Here are two proven ways to do just that.

Mindfulness

Meditation or Mindfulness reduces the cortisol levels which reduces inflammation at the cellular level. Even just ten minutes a day of sitting quietly and focusing our thoughts in a positive way helps cut down on stress. There are many free sites on the internet to help you begin this practice.

Yoga also lowers stress hormone levels and calms the body's nervous system. The deep breathing that

occurs when practicing yoga also boosts the body's resistance to infection.

Nutrition

Our immune system can also benefit from some nutritional tune-ups. The following foods are especially helpful.

Yogurt - A daily serving of yogurt helps keep the gut free of germs that can cause disease.

Citrus fruits - It is thought that vitamin C can lead to an increased white blood cell count, which helps us fight illness. So bring on the oranges, lemons and grapefruits! One side note - if you are on cholesterol lowering medications check with your physician before eating grapefruits. The enzymes in grapefruit can counteract the medication.

Chicken soup - it's true! The ingredients combine to serve an anti-inflammatory role.

Shellfish - Packed with zinc, shellfish helps the immune system cells function properly.

Almonds - One serving has more than 20% of Vitamin E and Manganese, which are both supporters of immune system function.

Finding the Rainbows

Most importantly, even though we are in isolation out of necessity, we all need to find ways to stay connected to each other. Think outside the box, be creative, and stay positive. We have all dealt with hard things, but talking about them can help.

As Maya Angelou says "Be a rainbow in someone else's clouds". Even in the hardest of times, a kind word from a loved one can make all the difference.

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to email me at mhabershaw@iccatholicschool.org

Take Care!

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