

Four Easy Ways To Keep Your Children Healthy

by: Greg Arnold, DC, CSCS, January 7, 2005, abstracted from "Reving Up Your Child's Immune System" from the December 27, 2004 issue of Daily Health News

For many parents, ear infections and strep throat seem to be common childhood occurrences. While antibiotics seems to help for a while, they are over-prescribed. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that nearly half of the 235 million antibiotic prescriptions given each year are unnecessary. The truth is that you can cheaply and easily boost children's resistance to disease. Although germ-proofing them is impossible, you can kick their immunity into high gear, an especially smart move during cold and flu season. Some ways to do this include:

CUT DOWN ON SUGAR. Although it's the brain's first choice of energy, too much sugar can decrease the strength of the immune system. The key is to give your children complex carbohydrates instead of the simple sugars found in so many processed foods that have become staples of many children's diets. Some suggestions include using brown rice instead of white rice and eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables instead of preservative-laden fruit and vegetable juices.

GIVE YOUR KIDS A MULTIVITAMIN. This is one of the best ways to make sure your children are getting the vitamins, minerals and antioxidants they need to keep their immune systems at their strongest. If you're looking for extra protection, herbal extracts are also a great idea. One such extract is elderberry and its ability to reduce the length of colds and flu. A 2003 study in the *Journal of International Medical Research* found that, in 54 people ages 18 to 54, patients taking elderberry extract recovered from the flu in more than half the time (3.1 days) compared with over a week with placebo.

HELP OFFSET THE EFFECTS OF ANTIBIOTICS. Although antibiotics kill the bad bacteria that are infecting us, but antibiotics also kill the good bacteria in our digestive tract that protect us. You can minimize the damage of antibiotics by giving your child probiotics, supplements that replace the natural, beneficial bacteria in the intestinal tract that can prevent bad bacteria from taking hold. A naturopathic physician will know which preparation is best.

CREATE A LOVING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR CHILDREN. Perhaps better than all of the supplements and antibiotics that are available to your children is the power of providing a healthy environment for them in the form of love and support. One of the best immune-boosters for kids is simply love and attention. Children who know they are loved by their parents have tremendous positive effects on their health. Emotional stress and unhappiness take a toll on the immune system and predispose children to infection and illness. A happy mind leads to a healthy body.

<http://www.ghchealth.com/newsletter/february05.html#9>