



03/14/2020

Dear Members of the Naturopathic Medical Community,

The Rhode Island Association of Naturopathic Physicians wishes you and your loved ones well. We would like to share with you information compiled from the CDC, Governor Raimondo's office, and the RI Department of Health regarding the COVID-19 virus, as well as some general information on ways to support the immune system. Prevention, self-care, and community support are the best tools to get through this as smoothly and safely as possible. **The major focus right now is on doing all that we can to help slow the spread of the virus.**

### **Slowing the spread = Hygiene & Social Distancing**

1. Prioritize wash your hands more often with warm water with soap for 20 seconds.. If that's not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash your hands before eating.
2. Do not touch your face, eyes, mouth without washing your hands first.
3. When handling doorknobs and other public surfaces use gloves or sleeves, including when on public transportation. Then, wash those gloves and sleeves daily.
4. When sneezing or coughing, use a tissue (and throw out immediately) or your elbow, and wash your hands immediately after.
4. Clean frequently touched surfaces daily. In your home: door knobs, tv remotes, labtops, refrigerator door, faucet handles, light switches, chairs, tables, pens. In your car: door handles, driving wheel, seat belt, radio button daily. On public transportation, limit what you touch and wear gloves.
5. Avoid crowds. Avoid shaking hands and hugging.
6. Keep 6 feet of distance between you and another person. Keep in mind that you can have the coronavirus, not have any symptoms, but still be contagious and spread it to others.
7. If you do not feel well or if you have any cold or flu symptoms (runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever), stay home and away from others, and call your Primary Care Provider or call the RI Department of Health's screening line at 401-222-8022.
8. If you are showing symptoms of a respiratory illness (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing), stay home and away from others, and call your Primary Care Provider or call the RI Department of Health's screening line at 401-222-8022.
9. If you suspect you may have the COVID-19 virus or have been exposed to the virus, stay home and away from others, and call the RI Department of Health's screening line at 401-222-8022.
10. Even if you are not in the high risk category, it is important to limit your activities and interactions with people. Limit outings to essential needs such as grocery shopping and picking up medications.
11. If you are elderly, have a compromised immune system, or have diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease, it is extra important to limit your direct interactions with others right now.



Families, friends, and community members, offering support and help to these high risk individuals can make a huge difference. Please consider offering to pick up groceries, pick up medications, and make meals for these individuals, and call them to make sure they have everything they need. Also, please consider donating money or time to local city or town organizations helping people with limited means get food, medications, and other necessary support.

## **Immune System Support**

Please note the following recommendations are for informational purposes only. Always check with your primary care provider or naturopathic doctor on what options are right for you.

1. **Hydration:** Water has numerous health benefits including keeping your blood and lymph flowing, which circulate your immune cells, helping them get to where they need to be.
2. **Eat a diet that supports immune function:** Vitamins, minerals, and other immune supportive nutrients are abundant in brightly colored and green leafy vegetables, garlic, and berries and grapes. Lean protein and healthy fats serve many important functions including stabilizing blood sugar levels during times of stress. Healthy bacteria in sauerkraut, kimchi, yogurt, and kombucha support your gut microbiome and immune function. Avoiding sugar, alcohol, and refined and overly processed foods is best as these foods suppress immune function or put unnecessary strain on immune system function.
3. **Exercise** supports your immune system. There's the potential bonus of fresh air and nature time.
4. **Sleep:** Adequate sleep is essential for a well-functioning immune system. Aim for 7-8 hrs/night.
5. **Relaxation, Fun, & Stress Reduction:** Doing activities that are comforting and calming helps keep your stress (cortisol) levels down, which is helpful for your immune system. Examples of some relaxing at-home activities are art, dance, meditation, yoga, deep breathing exercises, games, leisure reading, laughter. Staying connected with others is important too. Reach out to people to connect and check in. We are in this together. Also avoiding or limiting activities that elevate stress can be very helpful. As an example, limit the amount of time watching or reading the news right now. Pick 1-2 times a day where you watch or read news updates. Then, turn off the news and focus on activities that need to get done and ones that bring you joy, calm, or comfort. One practice is to stand up (or be seated), feel your feet rooted on the earth, place your hand over your heart, picture it beating and emanating light and love throughout your body, to your family and friends, and to the world.
6. **Use a Humidifier:** Higher air humidity reduces virus survival for other viruses and may decrease transmission in the case of the COVID-19 virus.
7. **Not Smoking:** Because viral-like respiratory symptoms are worse in smokers, reducing smoking will allow the immune system to fight a lung infection more efficiently.



## **Nutrients that Support the Immune System**

### **1. Vitamin C**

### **2. Zinc**

### **3. Selenium**

### **4. Vitamin D**

You can use food as medicine and focus on eating foods that contain these nutrients. Foods high in vitamin C include vegetables such as bell peppers, broccoli, cabbage and Brussel sprouts, leafy greens such as kale, fruits such as the citrus family, blackcurrants, apples, lychees, kiwis, strawberries and papayas, and herbs such as parsley, thyme, and rosehips. Nuts and seeds are a great source of zinc and selenium, especially pumpkin seeds for zinc and Brazil nuts for selenium. Nutritional supplements are another option.

## **Botanical Medicines that Support the Immune System**

Research has shown that these herbs have antiviral properties.

### **1. Licorice root\***

### **2. American Ginseng**

### **3. Elderberry**

### **4. Echinacea**

### **5. Garlic**

\*Please be aware that Licorice root is contraindicated for anyone with elevated blood pressure.

For nutritional and herbal supplements, quality is really important to insure you are consuming the most effective and pure ingredients. Buying supplements from companies that do third party, quality assurance testing is the best way to insure this. You can also ask your naturopathic doctor.

As a reminder, all the recommendations included here are for informational purposes only. Always check with your primary care doctor or naturopathic doctor to make sure any nutrients and herbs you are interested in taking are appropriate and correctly dosed for you. For those interested in learning more about naturopathic medicine and naturopathic doctors in Rhode Island, please visit [www.RIANP.org](http://www.RIANP.org).

Thank you for being a part of our community. We wish you and your loved ones well.

In health and with heart,

Dr. Chrysanthi Kazantzis, ND  
*President of the RLANP*

Dr. M Feibelman, ND  
*Vice President of the RLANP*