

Stress and Your Immune System

by Dr. Michael Nowazek

Stress has a negative impact on your immune system and long-term or chronic stress can weaken it. That makes stress management important, especially at a time like this.

WHAT IS STRESS?

First of all, what is stress? Stress is defined as change, whether positive or negative.

Negative change includes things like losing your job and worrying about money. What we're all going through right now certainly counts as stress.

Positive change can include things like getting married, getting a new job, perhaps doing an exercise program. These are positive things, but they are a change and so produce stress.

It doesn't matter whether the change is positive or negative. What does matter is the degree of change from normal. The degree of change will determine the amount of stress on your body.

What we're going through now is a huge negative change for many of us, and therefore a huge stress.

WHAT EFFECT DOES STRESS HAVE ON THE IMMUNE SYSTEM?

Stress produces certain hormones that keep your immune system from overreacting. Chronic stress can chip away at your immune system, suppressing it so that it cannot function optimally.

This shows up in different ways for different people. Some people will get sick during the period of stress, some will get sick after the stress, some will get sick both during and after the stress.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP MANAGE STRESS?

There are many, many different vitamins, herbs, and supplements that you could take for stress and stress management. Which ones and how much to take depends on the person. Every individual's needs are different and there are too many factors to consider to make it possible to suggest that any specific product that would be helpful to everyone.

For a recommendation of which vitamins and other supplements are right for you, please consult with your naturopathic doctor.

Even though our clinic is temporarily closed to help to flatten the coronavirus contagion curve, our doctors are still virtually available to patients via video and telephone. We urge all of our patients to book a virtual follow-up consultation so care can continue with little or no interruption. You can call the office at (780) 485-9468 to book, or you can now [book online](#).

MORE TO COME

There are a few lifestyle things that anyone could and should do to help manage stress, and these will be covered in further blogs and videos that will be produced very soon.

Stay tuned, and stay well!