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STRESSED OUT

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For many of us January is a stressful month. We are back to work after a Christmas break, less light and there seems to be less free time for ourselves. Let's not forget the Visa and MasterCard bills which have arrived. The central nervous system takes a great deal of the flack both physically and emotionally when pressures are building. On a physical level this means headaches and muscle tension, with impaired digestion and fatigue. Emotional, jumpy, irritable behavior results, with mood swings and sleep disturbances. The adrenal glands deserve special attention also, as they become drained through the constant requirement for adrenalin as we fight our way through the day. The adrenal glands chief action is to orchestrate a response to stress.

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ECHINACEA MYTHS

Adapted from an article by Robyn Klein

CAN YOU USE
ECHINACEA LONG-
TERM FOR
PREVENTION

Echinacea has been among the most popular herbs in North America over the past ten years. Yet, an enormous rift between conventional and holistic medical models has created a rich accumulation of erroneous warnings about Echinacea remedies. Let's review them one by one.

Myth #1: Echinacea stops working after five days.

This flawed belief stems from a mistranslation of a German study [1,2]. Participants of the study were actually administered Echinacea FOR ONLY five days, not longer, as was mistakenly assumed. Actually, this study indicates that Echinacea produces residual activity that lasts for a few days after termination. Another German study shows that taking Echinacea for twelve weeks results in a stronger immune response than after two weeks

Please see *Echinacea myths* on
page 3

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**IN A STUDY USING
ST. JOHN'S WORT
AND VALIUM 78%
RESPONDED TO
ST. JOHN'S WORT
COMPARED TO ONLY
54% USING DRUG
THERAPY**



ST. JOHN'S WORT FLOWER

People can react to a stressor in different ways. For instance, if an individual perceives the stressor as a challenge to his/her control of a situation, norepinephrine, the “fight” hormone is predominantly released. And, if the stress arousal increases and a possible loss of control is felt by the individual, then epinephrine, another “flight/anxiety” hormone is released. When the stress is prolonged and seen as hopeless, the individual becomes more distressed and feels defeated. This activates the hypothalamus in the brain. What follows is a cascade of hormonal pathways resulting in the final release of cortisol from the adrenal cortex (of the kidney). While cortisol in normal amounts is necessary for proper metabolic function, a chronic elevated cortisol level has adverse effects on your health, mood, body composition and performance. Here's the cycle: elevated cortisol secretion from physical or mental stress causes fat, protein and carbohydrates to be rapidly mobilized in order for you to take action against the stressor. This is sometimes referred to as the 'fight or flight' response. The mobilization of these nutrients in addition to epinephrine and a number of other endocrine hormones allows you to take quick action when presented with stress. During this mobilization, cortisol and adrenaline increase while DHEA (Dehydroepiandrosterone) and testosterone decrease. A chronic elevated cortisol level causes your body to enter a state of constant muscle breakdown and suppressed immune function, increasing your risk of illness and injury while reducing muscle. Cortisol can be modulated through rest, nutrition and supplementation. Finally, there are a number of supplements that are also helpful in modulating cortisol. A blend of high levels of B vitamins and key adaptogens like ginseng, in combination with herbs that have calming regulatory effect on the nervous system, St. John's Wort and Avena Sativa all help you adapt to 'stress' by helping regulate the body's endocrine hormones also known as the 'fight or flight' response to stress.

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VITAMIN B AND YOUR FOOD

Vitamin B6 is needed to help manufacture serotonin. Eating foods high in B6 will ensure that you have the tools for calming foods to do their work. These foods are high in B6 and carbohydrates: bananas, sweet potatoes, potatoes, raisins, whole-grain cereal.

Vitamin B5 often rides on the shirrtails of the other B vitamins in "anti-stress" formulas. It does work closely with the adrenal gland, which produces stress hormones. Pantothenic Acid (B5) supports the adrenal gland, renewing its supply of stress hormones and generally keeping the gland in optimal health. These foods are high in B5 green leafy vegetables, yeast, broccoli, bread, whole grain cereals, yams, legumes, liver, salmon, dairy, eggs, meat, kidney, brewer's yeast, chicken, nuts, beans, royal jelly.

RECIPE

Yams for Health

4 medium Yams, peeled and sliced
 1/2 t Finely shredded orange peel
 1/2 c Orange juice
 1 T Brown sugar
 1/4 t Salt
 1/4 t Cinnamon
 1/8 t Allspice

In a large skillet, bring 1" of water to a boil. Add yams. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until they are tender. Drain. In a small bowl, mix orange peel, orange juice, brown sugar, salt, cinnamon and allspice. Pour over yams in skillet. Cook and stir until bubbly. Simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes, spooning sauce over potatoes occasionally to make a glaze.



YAMS ARE HIGH IN B5 AND B6

MYTHS CONT.

[3]. Echinacea continues to enhance the immune system with long-term use.

Myth #2: Echinacea is toxic to the liver.

There is absolutely no evidence of liver damage from ingesting Echinacea. This is a clear case of exaggeration that is causing unnecessary alarm. Over 800 drugs can cause liver injury [4]. If one mistakenly assumes that herbs are drugs, it is easier to assume they are as dangerous.

Myth #3: Do not take Echinacea for longer than ten days to two weeks and never over eight successive weeks.

[6]. No explanation is given for the ten days to two weeks warning. This can only be based on exaggeration and lack of safety information, despite twenty-six controlled clinical trials [6, 7]. The eight-week caution is referenced to the Complete German E Commission Monographs [8]. This warning is neither cited nor explained and can only be assumed to be based on subjective concerns for lack of safety information, a common comment among clinicians and pharmacists inexperienced with the use of herbs.

Please see Echinacea myths on page 4

**HOW LONG IS IT SAFE
TO TAKE ECHINACEA?**

Myth #4: Echinacea can cause anaphylactic shock.

Any substance, including drugs, can cause a life threatening allergic reaction. It is very difficult to determine the overall frequency of attacks of anaphylaxis in the general population [9]. So, it must be even harder to find the frequency of anaphylaxis due to Echinacea. Compared to other anaphylactic causes, reports of Echinacea anaphylaxis are infrequent, considering the millions of doses taken daily in the U.S. and in Germany. The fear that Echinacea causes anaphylactic shock has been taken out of context. If you have any allergy, especially pollen allergies, you should be cautious of ingesting any new plant or food substance.

Myth #5: Echinacea will worsen symptoms of autoimmune conditions such as AIDS, Tuberculosis and Multiple Sclerosis.

Autoimmune conditions are exacerbated when the immune system attacks itself. Because Echinacea is believed to stimulate the production of (white blood cells) it is therefore assumed to stimulate autoimmune responses but this effect has never been supported by clinical or scientific evidence [11]. As with any adverse reaction, a few unreliable reports of this response exist among herbalists, not doctors. However, the majority of herbalists worldwide continue to use Echinacea in autoimmune conditions and have documented no such adverse responses [12]. In fact, Echinacea may be more of an immune regulator. While it does stimulate white blood cell activity, Echinacea may adjust immune function overall and actually tone down inappropriate immune responses.

Myth #6: Echinacea should not be taken during pregnancy.

This caution appears to be just an extension of the other erroneous beliefs of adverse effects. There is no clinical or research evidence to support any adverse effects during pregnancy. In the summer of 1999, a paper published in the respected medical journal, Fertility and Sterility, suggested that Echinacea could cause infertility [13]. This paper was flawed not only in the assumption that in vitro research can be extrapolated to live human beings, but it was also weakened by serious mathematical errors and concentrations that far exceeded typical human exposure [14, 15].

Conclusions

The enormous amount of research and many clinical trials involving Echinacea should be enough to demonstrate the excellent safety record of this herb. Alarming contraindications and warnings of adverse effects of Echinacea are overstated or based on hypotheses and poor scientific reasoning, not clinical or scientific evidence. Despite these revelations, warnings surrounding the use of Echinacea will continue unabated until common sense and clinical experience finally and overwhelmingly prove otherwise.

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Robyn Klein is a professional member of the American Herbalists Guild. She teaches at the Sweetgrass School of Herbalism in Bozeman, MT. She is the editor of Robyns Recommended Reading, a publication which critiques the literature from an herbalists perspective.

ASK THE EDITOR'S

By: Lyle L. Leffler H.D.

Question

Do I need a flu shot ?

Answer

The flu vaccine has become very popular in the western world. Physicians are promoting the vaccine with the hope of a flu free winter. My observation thus far has concluded that the vaccine has badly fallen short of its objective. In fact, for many, the vaccine has had a catastrophic effect. The statement, I have not been well since receiving the flu vaccine is not uncommon.

During my beginning years in homeopathy, I presented this same question to one of my mentors, Dr. Michael Buclevy. I would like to share with you his explanation. He stated that every second of everyone's life, the body's immune system, with total unawareness to the individual, is at war with the viruses about us. Due to stress depleting ones vitality, poor dietary habits or maybe weather change which so many people are sensitive to; results in what we refer to as susceptibility. How can a single vaccine address so many causes? He continued by mentioning a very important point, which I consider common sense. Viruses usually enter the body via the respiratory tract not by means of an inner muscular injection. When a virus enters the body in the normal way, the respiratory tract, the body's defense system can respond to the intruder in a very analytical, sophisticated manner producing the necessary antibodies and more importantly making sure that the body's immunity remains intact preventing the invasion of other viruses. This response may take several days. This is why we often experience what is referred to as pre-flu symptoms, which more often are nothing more than fatigue. However, with the flu shot, considering the manner in which it is administered, necessitates the need for an immediate response of the immune system. This response is unnatural, often leaving the body's defense in a strained run down state, producing susceptibility to other viruses. I have often observed in many patients receiving the flu vaccine, they didn't succumb to the flu, however, they did fall prey to another unrelated virus and remained ill considerably longer than if they had fell ill to the flu.

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RECOMENDATIONS TO COMBAT STRESS

1. **Lyle's Stress Free** a herbal tincture containing Avena Sativa, Siberian Ginseng and St. John's Wort.

10 -15 drops in a small amount of water 3x daily 20 minutes or more before a meal.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR'S

*Tammy Leffler H.D and
Lyle Leffler H.D*

At Natural Health Care Clinic we are filled with excitement and enthusiasm for 2008 with the launching of our web site www.doctorlyle.com. Our web site provides articles on major health issues such as cardiovascular disease, prostatitis and osteoporosis. Furthermore contained in our web site is a health index guide which allows one to look up everyday health concerns and determine what homeopathic remedies would be indicated. In addition to our web site Natural Health Care Clinic will be producing a news letter which will contain articles on many subjects pertaining to health. Your comments would be greatly appreciated. We would also appreciate receiving your questions you may have pertaining to health. One or two will be chosen and answered in our next news letter. This can be done through an email from our web site.



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2. **B-Plex Liquid supplement** One tablespoon mixed in juice or water once daily with breakfast.
3. 7-10 hours of restful sleep.
4. Try increasing the foods that are high in B vitamins.
5. Decrease the amount of caffeinated products that you intake, try Green Tea instead.
6. Boost your immune system in times of stress with 20 drops of Lyle's Echinacea Complex once a day.

Avena Sativa (oats)

Oats, full of vitamin B and calming constituents, gently reduce physical and emotional pressure, while nourishing the nervous system. Avena Sativa's effects build up gradually; it is designed to be taken long term. It is ideal for situations where the stress is on-going.

Siberian Ginseng (Eleutherococcus)

This herb is referred to as an adaptogen. Adaptogens are compounds that increase the ability of an organism to adapt to environmental stresses and to avoid damage from such stresses. It is useful when the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA) is depleted. Symptoms of this condition include fatigue, stress, neurasthenia and sore muscles associated with the hypo functioning of the endocrine system, and adrenal exhaustion indicated by a quivering tongue, dark circles under the eyes, and dilating/contracting pupils.

St. John's Wort (Hypericum)

Hypericum has a positive effect on mild depression and low mood. In combination with the other ingredients in stress free it helps to tackle the underlying anxiety that can trigger depression.