

# Dr. Orna's Immune Resilience Action Guide

[drornaizakson.com](http://drornaizakson.com) | [celilohealth.com](http://celilohealth.com)

The big epiphany that led me into herbalism and naturopathic medicine was that medicine is all around us, not just in the doctor's office. Medicine is in our kitchens, our gardens, our grocery stores and our natural surroundings. Here are the top ideas I share with my patients for immune resilience.

## 1. Start a tea habit.

Aromatic herbal teas gently support digestion and immunity. Creating a tea habit is an important step toward natural health. Get used to it in healthy times and it'll be easy to up the medicine if you get sick.

## 2. Don't skimp on sleep.

Your immune system builds its power when you rest. Depletion leaves you vulnerable, so make sure you get your ZZZs.

## 3. Eat easy.

Eat warm when it's cold out. Simply cooked foods are easier to digest, and put less stress on the rest of your systems. Emphasize vegetables, either baked or in easy stews.

## 4. Onions and garlic are your friends.

It's not for nothing that chicken soup is called "Jewish penicillin" — the onions and garlic at the broth's base are loaded with immune-supporting compounds. They help your body fight viruses, bacteria and fungal infections. If you do get sick, onions and garlic help make your snot less sticky and easier to get out of your body. And that is snot's purpose: to protect your membranes and move away the dead and the icky.

## 5. Steam with thyme.

The first sign of any kind of respiratory infection is the time to break out the thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*.) Aromatic compounds in this common culinary herb fight infectious viruses and bacteria while supporting the mucous membranes of your nose and lungs.

To do the steam, add a small handful of dried herb to a bowl (more if using fresh), pour on boiling water, cover the bowl with a towel, and then get your head under the towel to breathe in the fragrant steam. This will help open your lungs, soften the mucus and disinfect. Repeat as often as you need, and know that coughing is normal!

## 6. Elderberry is a great preventive.

Elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.) is one of the best-researched herbs for fighting winter viruses. The berries prevent viruses from latching onto human cells, and slow the spread of infection while immune system mounts its defense. Many folks take a little bit of

syrup or tincture daily to prevent infections, or use it frequently if an infection hits. The best part is that elderberry syrup is delicious, and very easy to [make](#) or buy!

### **7. Get your blood moving with water.**

Your body's immune surveillance team gets around by way of the circulatory system, so you've got to keep it moving. Making a daily practice of hydrotherapy can help. End each shower with three to five rounds of alternating hot and cold water — one or two minutes of hot followed by 10-20 seconds of cold, always ending with the cold. Think of it as jumping into a cold lake on a hot day, where the lake invigorates and tightens your skin and leaves you tingly. That contrast makes the small blood vessels in your body contract, physically pushing the blood around. It's okay to start slow.

### **8. Get your blood moving with movement.**

Moderate exercise also has a similar effect, and has been shown to improve immunity generally. But keep it moderate if you're worried about getting sick. Too much exercise is a stressor that can make you more vulnerable to winter crud.

### **9. Dose up on your Vitamin N.**

Getting out in nature (Vitamin N) helps keep you well! Spending time outside every day reduces immune-busting stress while boosting immunity. For instance, the phytoncides that permeate forest air activate your body's natural killer cells, which literally poke holes in virally infected cells until they die. Vitamin N for the win!

### **10. Optimize your Vitamin D.**

If you live farther from the equator it's impossible to make Vitamin D for much of the winter. Ask your doctor to check your levels and supplement as necessary. I've seen many patients turn around their winter wellness — physical and emotional — simply by boosting their Vitamin D.

Keep this list where you can see it and give these tools a try. Keep in touch and let me know how they work for you.

*Salúd!*

— *Dr. Orna*

P.S. Here's one more for you: If you need help, get help. My practice is now 100-percent telemedicine for the duration. Visit my clinic website or call 503-335-9479 for details.