



Fit For Sisters

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Columnist

Building a better immunity

The COVID-19 virus is a public health scare that has many people flocking to their local bulk surplus stores and cancelling travel plans. It's infecting people with fear and will be upsetting a lot of people in the next few weeks.

A healthy body can fight, if not prevent, the virus from taking hold — but there's little to no attention being paid to supporting a healthy immune system in the time of clickbait news and sensational media.

Supporting a healthy immune system is one major reason why diet, exercise, and healthy living are a core value. The basic tenets of immune support are diet, exercise, and rest.

Ensure that the body is being nourished with healthy food. Protein is vital to an immune system. Too little protein may lead to symptoms of weakness, fatigue, apathy, and poor immunity. Get a good amount of protein from lean meats, beans, whole grains, and dairy as part of a whole foods meal plan.

Next with diet is the micronutrients which support the immune system. Micronutrients are vitamins, minerals, and compounds that are in food that support a healthy body. For example, deficient zinc, selenium,

iron, copper, folic acid, and vitamins A, B6, C, and E are shown to suppress immune responses in animals. Most of these are found in plants, fortified whole grains, and healthy fats.

A healthy immune system can be supported with a low-inflammatory diet. A low-inflammatory diet consists of minimally processed foods, certain spices, and reducing some foods like red meat, dairy, and sugar. Spices like turmeric, ginger, and cayenne have anti-inflammatory properties. Greens, berries, and fish are great foods to lower inflammation.

Exercise promotes immune support but, there's a few considerations. A low steady state endurance pace will give the body a boost in circulating fluids in the body. It also supports white blood cells and antibodies against bugs. Too much intensity or too much weight will suppress the immune system because the immune system will respond to the exercise making a person susceptible to other infections. It's recommended to keep exercise in the moderate intensity for steady state endurance and use moderate weight lifting loads. There is no reason to forgo exercise.

Ensure the body is resting — not in the stereotypical sense of laying in bed all day when ill, but in getting outside, unplugging, and doing things that relieve stress.

Most of us aren't getting enough restful sleep. Constant rumination about the woes of life, electronic messages and alerts, and buzzing electronics have a big impact on sleep quality. A good sleep routine will help this. Turn down lights when it's dark, take a walk and let the natural cool air cool the body down and relax. Do something like read a relaxing book, listen to music or podcasts, or just take a moment to reflect.

Another important immune boost is getting out in sunlight. It is theorized that the flu season coincides with the natural wane in sunlight and our bodies lack vitamin D. When flu season is the most extreme, it is also when vitamin D levels are the lowest. Time outside is the natural remedy, but a supplement can also be taken.

Perhaps this latest pandemic is a call to action. It's time to pay attention to wellness, as resting on the laurels of advances in public health has failed.



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DREAMS: Virus outbreak has scuttled athletic events

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the track and kissed it. An unforgettable moment for all who witnessed it.

Sadly, the boycott held and McChesney's Olympic dreams remained unfulfilled. He went to Europe to compete and ran incredibly well, beating both the silver and bronze Olympic medalists during the course of the summer. A year later at a race in Sweden, he beat the Olympic gold medalist from Ethiopia. He received a gold Congressional medal along with others who had "qualified" but could not compete.

But it wasn't the same as running in the Olympic final, which he had long envisioned.

I knew McChesney slightly during my college years and would later have the great fortune to coach his younger brother Ken. It still pains my heart to think

of what might have been for Bill. He was one of the fiercest competitors I have ever seen, along with being a fine human being.

I am sure current Duck Sabrina Ionescu, Oregon's celebrated basketball star, feels much the same as McChesney must have, never knowing if her Ducks would have made it to the pinnacle goal, the NCAA championship game this year.

Maybe it's a little easier for Ionescu understanding that it is a global pandemic, rather than a political decision, that took away her dreams, but for both these amazing Ducks, Ionescu and McChesney, the intensity of their competitive hearts must also feel, and have felt, tremendous disappointment and grief. Just as McChesney regrouped, I am sure Ionescu will move forward as a professional player.

I suppose we all have to do some regrouping as we deal with the challenges of our present situation.

Here's to giving it our best in trying times.

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