

health: wellbeing

EAT TO BEAT THE LURGY

Some nutrients can help boost your immune system, while others aren't all they're stacked up to be says Vanessa Schuldt

Most people don't give their immune system a second thought until they're out for the count with a cold. Some nutrients and herbs may help keep the lurgy at bay. Leading the pack are:

SELENIUM This trace mineral aids immune function. It's plentiful in seafood, meat, wholegrain cereals, dairy products and Brazil nuts. Scientists have found selenium increases immune cell production of proteins called cytokines, which help clear flu viruses from the body.

ECHINACEA This medicinal herb is often taken to prevent colds, and new, credible research suggests it can reduce the risk of catching one by 58 percent and reduce the duration of a cold by 1.4 days.

GINSENG North American ginseng is believed to have immune-enhancing properties. A study of subjects taking 400mg of ginseng extract or a placebo during the flu season found the former experienced fewer or shorter colds, with fewer symptoms per cold.

GARLIC In a three-month trial, participants receiving garlic were almost two-thirds less likely to catch a cold than those given a placebo.

Those who did catch a cold recovered one day faster in the garlic group.

Other nutrients used to prevent or treat colds are controversial:

VITAMIN C According to evidence, this vitamin doesn't really deserve its reputation of being renowned for preventing colds. A review of 30 trials and more than 11,000 participants found that 0.2g vitamin C (or more) per day has no significant effect on common cold occurrence. It reduced the duration and severity of cold symptoms slightly, although the effect was too small to be useful.

ZINC Found in meats, seafood, dairy products, whole grains, legumes and nuts, zinc is an important immune booster. Evidence supporting the usefulness of zinc lozenges and nasal gels for colds and flu, however, is conflicting. More research is needed for an answer on this.

Vanessa is an accredited practising dietitian, visit nutritionsspeak.com.au.



BELLI FOR YOUR BELLY

With all of the unnatural additives around, it is becoming increasingly important to know what you're putting on your skin, especially when pregnant or breastfeeding. Some skincare ingredients, such as salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide and oxybenzone, may be absorbed into your bloodstream where they can pass into your baby's circulation.

Dr Jason Rubin, founding physician of Belli skincare, created the products to help keep mums and babies safe. Belli does this by conducting teratology screenings to identify any chemicals that may permeate the skin and be harmful to the developing foetus.

Products in the Belli Pregnancy range include belly oil for stretch mark protection, body lotion to relieve dry, itchy skin and foot relief cream. Belli Motherhood helps ease the transition into preventative, long-term skincare routines and includes eye-brightening cream and nursing cream to aid chapped skin. This range is also screened so that any ingredients known to be harmful to nursing babies are excluded.

The products in the Belli Baby range, such as nappy rash cream, and hair and body wash, offer pure and mild ingredients to nourish and protect delicate skin. Every Belli product is allergy tested and free of paraben preservatives, dyes and synthetic fragrances.

Pictured from left, Belli Pregnancy All Day Moisture Body Lotion, \$48/430ml, Pregnancy Elasticity Belly Oil, \$78/120ml and Motherhood Body Firming Serum, \$65/240ml. Visit belliskincare.com.au or phone 1300 884 916 for stockists.



KNOW THE BABY BLUES

Almost one in six new mums will be affected by postnatal depression (PND). It's important to know and recognise it.

BABY BLUES This occurs between three and 10 days after birth, affecting around 80 percent of women, who feel teary and overwhelmed due to changes in hormone levels. The baby blues usually passes with good support.

PND Developing between a month and up to a year after birth, symptoms include feeling useless or inadequate, fear or anxiety for no good reason, constant blame or unhappiness, or thoughts of self-harm. If you feel this way, see a doctor immediately.

POSTNATAL PSYCHOSIS This can affect one in 500 in the first week after birth. The mother may feel paranoid and hallucinate, be unable to think clearly and have delusions. This is an emergency and should be treated as such. See beyondblue.org.au for more.