

"Flu Proof" Your Kid: 5 Ways to Do It Naturally

1. A Healthy Immune System Starts in the Gut

What your kids eat will be the foundation on which their immune system is built. In TCM, a healthy diet rich in vegetables, bone broth, whole grains, fermented foods, essential fatty acids (like fish oil & coconut oil) are the way to go. Daily probiotics from fermented foods, yogurts or supplements help keep your child's gut balanced by providing good bacteria like acidophilus and bifidus which support healthy immune function. Avoiding sugary foods and white flour foods is really important since it affects how well the immune system functions.

2. Pediatric Tuina Massage for Wellness

Another way we can strengthen our kids' bodies to resist the flu is a nightly pediatric tuina massage. This massage is like a secret weapon. Doing it every night supports the immune system and stimulates the body to heal itself. The massage harmonizes and strengthens all the organ systems in TCM. Doing this addresses any minor issues and balances them before they become major issues.

3. Kitchen Remedies

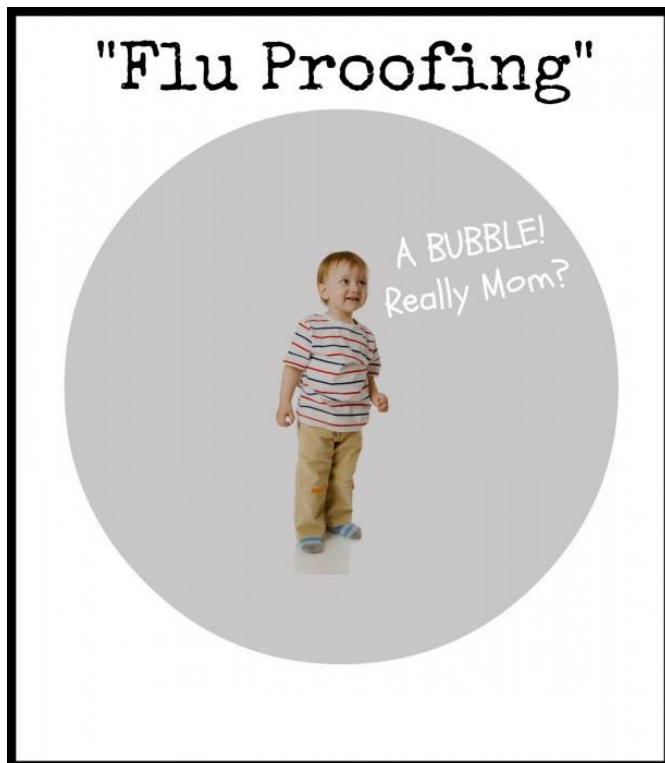
A traditional remedy for preventing the flu is to just keep a cut up onion next to your kid's bed at night. To find out more read: *Prevent Norovirus: Keep an Onion on Your Nightstand**

4. Herbal Remedies to Boost Immune Function

You can use this time-tested Chinese herbal remedy, called Yu Ping Feng Wan, or Jade Screen, which contains a few herbs, including astragalus to help boost immune function. This one is safe for kids and can be taken on a daily basis throughout the cold and flu season. Mushrooms like Reishi are also great for boosting immune function and supporting the lungs. Other herbs like elderberry, echinacea, mint, golden seal and honeysuckle can be beneficial as well. Be consistent in your use if you want it to be effective.

5. Slow Down in the Winter

All year round our kids are expected to keep the same routine, work hard at school, do mountains of homework and participate in after school activities. Shorter days during winter mean we should all be resting more and doing less to stay in rhythm with the season. If you see your kids are extra tired, cranky or stressed it's time to dial back and clear the schedule. Taking a day for extra R&R is better than taking a week off because of the flu. It will help your body rejuvenate and can sometimes be the difference between getting sick or not.



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Develop Healthy Habits & Routines: Even though you shouldn't obsess about germs it doesn't mean we shouldn't help our kids develop healthy hygiene habits. Pay special attention to how well your kids are washing their hands. It should be mandatory to wash up after a trip to the store, going to the bathroom, before meals and after blowing their nose (they will try to trick you from time to time).

Don't get crazy about killing germs. Wiping down every surface of your house with toxic cleaning products isn't healthy or safe. Nor is washing your hands 30 times a day because it can strip your kid's skin of its natural antibacterial properties. Plus, this sends the message that your kid's should be afraid of germs and their body isn't strong enough to resist them. Also, anti-bacterial soaps don't work any

better than plain old soap so I wouldn't bother.

Get Sick to Stay Well: Don't panic if your child begins to exhibit flu-like symptoms. There is no need to be afraid. As your child grows and develops they need to get sick and then get better to build a healthy immune system. A safe and timely resolution of illness means our kid's bodies are building up a storehouse of anti-bodies. These antibodies will prevent illness when we're exposed to the same virus in the future. As much as we want to prevent them from getting the flu, there is some benefit to getting it. Just keep in mind that even though it is terrible to have your kid go through an illness there is an upside.

There is no way to completely "flu proof" your kids, but following a few basic principles for healthy living, doing a nightly massage and putting onions by the bed (why not, right?) are a good start. If you child gets sick frequently or has lingering symptoms after getting the flu, I would highly recommend taking them to a pediatric acupuncturist who can help your child's body heal itself and recommend a personalized herbal program, too.

References

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*Prevent Norovirus: Keep an Onion on Your Nightstand: <http://healthnutnation.com/2013/01/28/prevent-norovirus-with-onion/>