

IMMUNE HEALTH WITH HERBS

Deb Soule, Herbalist, Avena Botanicals www.avenabotanicals.com debsoule.com
Rockport, Maine Our biodynamic gardens & shop are open Mon-Friday, 12-5, year-round

“Some important insights arise when immune system function is viewed from an ecological perspective, not simply a biochemical or medical one. Human immunity is a vital component of the interface between the individual and the world. The role of the human immune system is not simply to resist the dangers present in the environment. Rather, it is part of the complex and beautiful dance of elements flowing back and forth between the human body and the rest of the world. Seen within the context of ecology, both human and environmental, immunity is about harmony.” David Hoffman, Herbalist & Author

A holistic approach to immunity includes good nutrition, healthy digestion and elimination, emotional well-being, friendly body-centered movement and exercise, quiet time in nature, and spiritual openness and vitality.

HERBS AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

1) **Surface Immune Activation**, non-specific immune response, primarily involves the secretory system (phagocytes, monocytes, macrophages) for acute conditions.

2) **Deeper Immune Activation**, specific immune response, maintains inner ecology (homeostasis), cellular immunity and surveillance of rogue cells.

3) **Endocrine Immune Response** through the use of adaptogen herbs.

“Russian scientists say that adaptogen herbs increase the resistance within the body to a wide range of stressors and normalize functions. Western researchers look at how adaptogens regulate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis.”

David Winston, Herbalist & Author

If you have an autoimmune condition, experience hypersensitive reactions to various substances, or have an organ transplant, please address your condition with a holistically minded health care professional before using herbs.

Surface Immune Herbs

Calendula flower (*Calendula officinalis*) astringent, enhances immunity, lymphatic, supports digestion and liver health, vulnerary **

Echinacea root, leaf and flower (*Echinacea purpurea*) stimulates surface immune system. Supports lymphatic circulation. Soothes gums and mucous membranes of mouth

Elder flower and berry (*Sambucus canadensis*) flower: diaphoretic, supports upper respiratory system. Berry: supports healthy immune response, soothes the respiratory system.

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) circulatory stimulant, expectorant, enhances immunity

Ginger root (*Zingiber officinalis*) warms and stimulates the digestive, immune and respiratory systems.

Holy/Sacred Basil (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) supports healthy digestion and immunity. Opens the heart and mind. Enhances prana and lung health. **

Greek Mullein leaf and flower (*Verbascum olympicum*) demulcent, expectorant, lymphatic, enhances immunity. Flower oil for ears.

Marshmallow root (*Althea officinalis*) demulcent, emollient, expectorant. Soothes digestive, respiratory and urinary system.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) pungent, warming, digestive, enhances immunity, rejuvenative, supports circulation, nervine

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) pungent, warming, respiratory & immune support.

Immune Boost with thyme, elderberry and ginger glycerite-my favorite blend for quickly supporting the immune system.

Deeper Immune Herbs

Astragalus root (*Astragalus membranaceus*) qi/chi tonic, hepatoprotective, immune tonic. Strengthens lung qi which helps create the wei qi. In Chinese medicine the wei qi is the protective energy that helps prevent illness caused by external pernicious influences.

Codonopsis root (*Codonopsis pillosa*) Chi tonic, demulcent, expectorant, strengthens digestion, improves appetite, improves overall energy and immunity.

Reishi mushroom (*Ganoderma lucidum*) Adaptogen, expectorant, hepatoprotective. Immunomodulator-strengthens immune system and down-regulates excessive immune response. Supports adrenal function. See Avena's Immune Broth.

Schisandra berries (*Schisandra chinensis*) Adaptogen, astringent, hepato-protective, memory tonic, nervine

Schisandra is respected by many western herbalists as an overall tonic and rejuvenative herb for the kidneys, liver, lungs, mind and emotional heart. The berries enhance energy, calm the mind, and ease stress and anxiety. When taken over several weeks or months, Schisandra enhances energy levels and strengthens the immune system, making it a valuable adaptogenic tonic. Schisandra helps build our inner capacity to be less emotionally reactive, to feel grounded, and to be more resilient-my favorite herb for building inner and outer Resiliency. **Avoid during acute conditions.**

Shitake mushroom (*Lentinus edodes*) Strengthens immunity.

Endocrine Immune Response (Adaptogen herbs)

American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) supportive for weak or elderly people. Strengthens adrenals, enhances immunity, moistens and nourishes yin. Re-regulates overly stressed nervous system, helps deficient insomnia.

Ashwagandha root (*Withania somnifera*) Restorative and rejuvenative tonic for women, men & nonbinary folks. Calming, clears mind, improves memory.

Eleuthero root (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) adrenal and qi/chi tonic. When taken consistently over several months, Eleuthero supports adrenal health and enhances overall energy. Encourages relaxation of the body and clarity of mind. Evens out the peaks and valleys associated with stress. **

Holy/Sacred Basil daily use balances chakras, deeply nourishing, promotes long life, joy, compassion, clarity and devotion. Enhances resilience. Opens heart and mind.

Licorice root (*Glycyrrhiza uralensis*, *G. glabra*) adrenal support, antioxidant, demulcent, expectorant, hepato-protective.

Reishi mushroom see above

Schisandra berry see above

Shatavari root (*Asparagus racemosus*) An important Ayurvedic rejuvenating herb. Often taken with ashwagandha. Increases resilience to stress, calms anxiety, cooling and moistening, balances hormonal shifts and supports clear mind and memory.

****Avoid during pregnancy**