

# Why Am I Always Getting Sick and Never Healing Well?

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Posted on southampton.patch.com on April 23, 2011

A. J. in Sagaponack asks: I seem to be always sick with something and not healing well. Any thoughts?

When my daughter, Summer, gets a small cut on her finger and asks for a Band-Aid, she does so with the full expectation that when the Band-Aid is removed a couple of days later, the cut will have been “magically” healed. She is usually rewarded by her faith in her body’s healing capacity.

On a macroscopic level, healing appears to us as a miracle or as magic because of all the little elements that go into the repair of the damaged tissue. The removal of foreign material and destruction of harmful bacteria all happens in a microscopic world that is not directly accessible to our unaided eye.

My daughter’s unquestioning child’s faith in the healing powers and magic of her body are also an important ingredient when it comes to healing more severe or recurrent diseases. Left to its own devices, the body tends towards health. When someone doesn’t heal well or keeps getting sick there is reason that lies in one or more of the five areas that affect the integrity of our immune system. The first of these is nutrition. Nutrition supplies the basic biochemical building blocks that provide the infrastructure for our immune system to function properly. Just eating a broad diet doesn’t guarantee that you’ll get what your immune system needs because there are issues of the quality of the food and the efficiency of the digestive system to be reckoned with.

Infection is the second area that affects the functioning of our immune system. Viruses that directly attack immune function like EBV, CMV and HIV will have long term consequences on our ability to protect ourselves from future infections. EBV and CMV are common. More than 96 percent of the population have been exposed to them at some point. Imbalances in the micro-organisms in our digestive tract will also have a profound affect on immune system.

As a consequence of our industrialization, toxins now abound throughout our environment. A casual perusal of <http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov> will give you some small idea of how big and prevalent the problem is. That’s why it is important to limit your exposure to toxins wherever you can such as choosing to eat as much organic food as you can and drinking plenty of pure water, fluoride not included.

Trauma is the next agent of immunological suppression. The only form of trauma that can directly hurt our immune system is that which comes from the exposure to radiation. This not only brings to mind Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and Fukushima but also commercial flight. When you are cruising at 35,000 feet, you are above much of the atmosphere that protects us from ionizing radiation. Studies have shown that air flight personnel have a higher incidence of severe and chronic diseases because of this.

The fifth horseman of immunological apocalypse is stress. The term stress was coined by Dr. Hans Selye just more than 70 years ago. According to Selye, “dis-ease is an attack on any particular aspect of your body or mind that creates a distressed physiology.” Stress is an individual’s non-specific response to any stimulus, conscious or unconscious, physical or physiological. It is such an integral component of our existence that Selye has stated that, “Complete freedom from stress is death.” There are two categories of stress: eustress (characterized by happiness and enjoyment) and distress (characterized by anguish, tension and worry). During distress the adrenal glands secrete the steroid hormone cortisol to excess and without the normal cycling that usually occurs, which will then suppress immune function.

Based on your history and physical findings, lab tests can determine the best way to proceed both by answering the question of why your immune system isn't protecting you as it should and what medical disorders you have now that should be directly addressed.

Send in your questions and be well.