



COVID-19: Hope, Empowerment and Resilience



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Some of us are grieving, some of us are fearful, some of us are hungry, some of us are lonely. None of us are who we were 3 – 4 months ago. All of us are confused. SARS-CoV2 is a virus, or more appropriately a virion. A virion is reported to be 10,000 times smaller than a grain of salt. How is it that it has infected at least 3 million people worldwide and caused almost 230 thousand deaths (as of this writing)? How has something so small laid bare racial and financial disparities, leadership vacuums, economic frailty, cruel profiteering, a broken healthcare system and much individual suffering? How has it kept us in our homes afraid to come out? This novel infection has brought uncertainties and preyed on our naivete (in many ways). Uncertainty is uncomfortable and breeds fear. Fear can bring out the worst in human beings. Our essential workers bravely face their fears every day and many will pay the physical and mental price for that – some have paid the ultimate price. All this from a virus?

“Hope and fear cannot occupy the same space. Invite one to stay.”
—Maya Angelou

Twenty years ago I had cancer. I was up close and personal with fear and hope. I invited hope to stay. It meant I had to take some kind of action. I had to advocate for myself. I needed a plan. I knew that my body needed me to stop leading the life that brought me cancer and start leading a life that was congruent with my beliefs. I made up a plan called “decrease exposure and increase protection”. I didn’t just hope it would work, I worked on making it work. And I am doing the same thing for myself, my loved ones and my patients during the threat of COVID-19.

We really have to come clear

about this. The risk factors for having a severe infection with this virus (except for age and male sex) are lifestyle related: obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension. Forty percent of the people in this country have a chronic disease and some have several. Why? Because we have already drank the Kool Aid – eating the standard American, highly processed, and glyphosate laden diet. We go to the doctor who treats us with the latest from Big Pharma. And how is that working out? We are getting sicker and sicker as a nation. The rates of chronic disease continue to rise as we gobble up more non-food and take more drugs. We have become sitting ducks for a pandemic like SARS-CoV2. Fear has gripped our nation and we are told the only thing we can do is to stay inside our homes and wait for a treatment or a vaccine. It feels as if we are being held hostage to Big Pharma. Has anyone at the White House Podium said, “Hey, you can strengthen your immune system by exercising and losing some weight.” “You can eat some real fruits and vegetables and become more resilient to disease.” No one has reminded us of the power of the miraculous human body to adapt, to defend, and to heal if it is not simultaneously being poisoned and mistreated. Every minute you have a choice. You can move from fear to strength, growth and hope.

The CDC has taught us that the contribution to our current state of health or illness is only 30% genetic. 70% of our health-state is due to our “exposome” (how we eat and sleep, the air we breathe and water we drink....)

Decrease Exposures

There is a clear link between toxicity and autoimmunity, with a consequent dysfunction in immune defense. A toxic burden utilizes cell resources and impairs function.

- Stop eating “non-food” with preservatives, additives, colorings, and contaminated with glyphosate (Round-Up);
- Stop exposing yourself to synthetic chemicals in your cleaning products, yard products and hygiene products
- Remove your mercury burden from dental amalgams, eating large fish and getting mercury

containing vaccines

- Eliminate exposure to mold and mycotoxins from water damaged buildings, impure drinking water; and air pollution.
- Decrease your exposure to wifi – turn it off at night, keep your cell phone away from your bedroom. I have patients with mutations in their voltage-gated calcium channel genes and they are much more susceptible to every stressor.
- That small virion travels on particulates and pollen so decrease these exposures
- Physical Distancing—that’s a given
- See ewg.org for resources.

Increase Protection—Build Immune Competence

Nutrition: A high Dietary Inflammatory Index has shown an association with diabetes and severity of diabetes. The Suppers Program in Princeton has shown that eating a wide variety of organic, fresh, whole foods is associated with loss of chronic diseases. Start eating real food and lots of vegetables and some fruits.

Exercise: Exercise stimulates the innate immune system. Regular moderate intensity exercise (walking, running or cycling for 150 minutes per week) has an overall anti-inflammatory effect on the body and a positive effect on our sense of well-being. It has been associated with a decrease in both incidence and mortality rates for influenza and pneumonia.

Sleep: If you sleep for less than 7 hours per night and are exposed to rhinovirus, you will be 3 x more likely to get this common cold. Adequate quality sleep is associated with healthy melatonin levels in the brain. Children naturally have high melatonin levels and we suspect that is what protects them from this virus.

Stress: Susceptibility to and severity of diseases are exacerbated during stressful periods. Psychological stressors can disrupt our natural barrier defenses including our gut flora and increase inflammatory responses. We need to breathe deeply more often and meditate.

Gut Microbiota: The beneficial bacteria in the intestines regulate our immune responses. Alterations of these gut microbial communities can cause immune dys-

regulation, leading to increased risk for infection and autoimmunity. Shower them with food based prebiotic fiber, probiotics and some fermented foods.

Drink more water: Hydration flushes toxins from the kidneys, improves blood and lymph flow and keeps joints and membranes moist and fluid. Drink ½ oz per pound of body weight daily.

Reduce alcohol: It is an immune suppressant

Stop Smoking: Nothing more needs to be said about that

More Specific Preventive Measures

Vitamin C: Vitamin C helps white blood cells do their job better. Their “ammunition” for killing microbes is dependent on a continuing supply of Vitamin C. Treating hospitalized COVID-19 patients with intravenous Vitamin C has been done successfully in China and is in clinical trials in the US.

Vitamin D: Stimulates the immune system and has been shown to prevent respiratory infections.

Vitamin A: Enhances immune function; has shown benefit for people with infectious diseases.

Melatonin: The most potent antioxidant in the brain. It inhibits the NLRP3 Inflammasome (part of the cytokine storm) of COVID-19. Curcumin, Resveratrol, EGCG, nitric oxide also inhibit this.

Zinc: Zinc blocks the viral replicase enzyme, preventing the viral RNA from copying itself inside the infected cell

Quercetin: is a zinc ionophore, changing the cell membrane to allow zinc to enter the cell. Hydroxychloroquine is also a zinc ionophore. The recent negative studies on hydroxychloroquine are due to using it too late in the course of the disease and using it without zinc!! Broccoli Sprouts (fresh or extracts) and Green tea (EGCG) are also zinc ionophores.

Glutathione: recycles Vitamin C
Colostrum: increases secretory IgA, the most abundant antibody in the body, protecting your mucous membrane barriers from intruders.

Licorice: The herb (not the candy) is anti-inflammatory,

immune-stimulating, and antiviral. It may bind to the ACE2 receptor blocking entry of the virus. It was used to treat SARS.

Andrographis: An immune stimulating herb that has been shown to reduce the severity and duration of respiratory infections. It has been targeted as a candidate for treating COVID-19 as it can inhibit several of the viral enzymes.

Don’t treat a low grade fever (less than 100.5): Low grade fevers enhance the activity of the immune system. For mild illness without fever, mimic fever with hot/cold therapy (google hydrotherapy and contrast shower)

Forest bathing: Breathing phytoncides (volatile essential oils from wood) has immune stimulating properties that appear to last for over a week.

The lungs are not the only target of SARS-CoV2. They are the entry organ. The virus finds the ACE2 receptor on the blood vessels as well, impairing the blood vessel lining and starting a cascade of blood clotting that can affect every organ from the brain to the toes. That’s why it is so lethal. We can wait for the drugs - remdesivir, famotidine, sarilumab, stem cells, hydroxychloroquine, vaccines—all will come with their benefits and risks. Now is the time to strengthen your own innate resilience to infection. This virus is not done with us. We have to take our power back, and face it with less fear, less worry of infecting our loved ones, less economic consequences, and less burden on the expensive back-end of the medical system.

I am currently seeing patients via TeleHealth. Everyone in the office is involved in offering individualized immune support protocols. Stay well! Stay safe!!

Dr. Kate Thomsen’s office for holistic health care is located in Pennington, NJ. She is trained in Family Medicine, and Board Certified in Integrative Medicine, and is an Institute for Functional Medicine Certified Practitioner. She has been practicing Functional Medicine for 20 years. For more information see www.drkatethomsen.com or call the office at 609-818-9700.