How To Strengthen Your Inner Shield: Science-Based, Integrative Strategies for a Healthy Immune System During a Pandemic

by Cynthia Li, MD

Cynthia Li, MD, is a physician and author whose decades-long personal healing journey through a disabling autoimmune illness required her to question her medical training. Through extensive experimentation with complementary approaches to Western medicine, she ultimately embraced the principles of integrative and functional medicine and wove together intuition and science toward a brave new medicine which allowed her to unlock her body’s innate potential to heal. In these unique times of pandemic, it has become clear that the primary difference between people who develop serious illness from COVID-19 and those who have mild to no symptoms is the strength of their immune system. Dr. Li’s experiences as both doctor and patient through an internal "dark night of the soul" and an external medical/bodily condition affecting her immune system point to tools for building personal immunity and resilience in the face of crises like the current one. She is the author of Brave New Medicine: A Doctor’s Unconventional Path to Healing Her Autoimmune Illness, as well as a new booklet titled, How To Strengthen Your Inner Shield: Science-Based, Integrative Strategies for a Healthy Immune System During a Pandemic [AVAILABLE AS A GIFT DOWNLOAD AT THE END OF THIS PIECE]

The Two Shields

To combat the Covid-19 outbreak, the media has focused almost exclusively on the outer shield. That is, minimizing spread. This includes physical distancing. Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Wearing disposable masks and gloves. Sanitizing table tops and door knobs. Don’t forget to wipe down the groceries. This first line of defense is vital.

But there’s a second, equally important and often overlooked line of defense: the inner shield. That is, your immune system.

The immune system is the microscopic army that stands guard just under the surface of your mouth, nose, lungs, skin, and gut. In addition, there’s an intricate network of stations throughout the body where more troops are keeping the peace, and awaiting orders to mobilize against an invasion.

A strong inner shield translates to resilience—the capacity to bounce back, to restore balance and wellbeing whether you’re faced with an acute infection or not. You can always strengthen this shield, no matter your current health status. And when you do, you can treat an infection more effectively—if you already have one—and potentially prevent or reduce the chances of future ones. This is primarily done by giving your immune system what it needs to function optimally, as well as regulating the stress response.

This booklet offers some strategies for strengthening the inner shield. They may seem
simple. But simple doesn’t always mean it’s easy. You will need to pause, take notice of your environment, and perhaps most challenging, care for yourself. Also included are a list of supplements. Taken together, these strategies can help restore a sense of agency. You can co-participate in your life, thereby reducing one of the greatest insults to any infection: fear.

Everybody Wins

When you employ both shields, you’re helping everyone – yourself, your family, community, nation and – in this period of a pandemic – the world. You’re freeing up scarce health care resources for those in need, and maintaining good health to serve those around you. Everybody wins.

So take note. Take heart. And please share widely.

In times like these, we need a brave new medicine.

Download a gift copy of the book here.

For more inspiration join this Saturday’s Awakin Call with Cynthia Li: "Brave New Medicine: Building Personal Resilience and Immunity." RSVP and more details here.