



CHARLTON HEALTH

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Reducing The Risk of Infection

1. Hand Washing

The most important way to reduce the spread of infections is hand washing. Always wash regularly with soap and water after being in a public place and especially before eating. When washing your hands sing “Happy Birthday” twice to know you have spent enough time cleaning all hand surfaces; especially between your fingers.

2. Vaccination

Updating your adult vaccines can protect against many types of infection. Being vaccinated protects you and those around you who may be even more vulnerable to infection. Beyond the highly suggested annual flu shot, the pneumococcal vaccine, Prevnar 13 (followed 8 weeks later by Pneumovax) are highly suggested for people at risk of pneumonia. This includes all adults who have respiratory conditions, diabetes or who are on immunosuppressive treatments, such as biologic therapy. These vaccines are supplied through public health for those who are aged 50 and over and have increased risk of pneumonia. This vaccine lasts several years. The shingles vaccine is approved for adults aged 50 and over. It is now supplied through public health for adults aged 65-70. As it is a live vaccine, check on the best time to have this administered if you are on a biologic/immunosuppressive treatment.

3. Diet

In addition to eating a well balanced diet avoiding processed foods and foods high in sugar and fat, there are several foods that offer natural anti-viral and anti-bacterial activity. You may wish to consider adding the following to your diet:

- **Garlic** – Garlic is one of the most powerful anti-microbial foods you can eat. It contains several components that will fight against bacteria, yeast, fungus, worms and even candida overgrowth.
- **Coconut Oil** – Coconut oil contains a medium chain fatty acid called lauric acid that lends coconut its antibacterial properties.
- **Lemons** – Lemons contain two compounds called coumarin and tetrazine, both of which can help fight against several pathogens. Lemons have protective effects both inside and outside the body.
- **Ginger** – The compound in ginger known as gingerol has been shown to help fight infections, specifically those in the mouth. Making a tea from boiling a piece of ginger root is very soothing to the throat while being anti-viral.
- **Turmeric** – Turmeric has some of the most reliable scientific backing when it comes to its anti-microbial power. It has studies to prove its effectiveness against *Bacillus cereus*, *Bacillus coagulans*, *Bacillus subtilis*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. The compound that lends the bright orange colour to turmeric is the same compound that gives it its anti-microbial power.
- **Honey** – Honey was actually one of the first anti-microbial medicines to be used long before pharmaceuticals were around. Honey contains an enzyme that releases hydrogen peroxide, which effectively kills off certain kinds of bacteria. Make sure that your honey is raw and unprocessed. Pasteurized honey will not have the same effect.

4. Rest

Sleep is a fundamental of good health. Having 7-8 hours of sleep per night reduces stress to the body as many of our cells repair during this time.

5. Natural Supplements

There are many non-prescription products promoted for preventing and treating viral and bacterial infections. For people with an auto-immune disease, over stimulating the immune system can cause a flare of their disease. For this reason products such as Cold Fx are not suggested. Oscilloccinum, a homeopathic product and Allimax, a concentrated garlic capsule are examples of products that can be taken. Oscilloccinum is taken as a vial of pellets dissolved in the mouth at the onset of a cold/virus and repeated every 6 hours for 3-6 doses. It can also be taken preventatively as a vial every 2-3 weeks. Allimax is a garlic supplement that can be taken as a single capsule daily as a preventative or 5-10 capsules can be taken daily for up to 3 days at the first sign of infection. Do not take garlic supplements if you are on a prescription blood thinner. Ask our pharmacists for further non-prescription options.

6. Knowing the signs of infection

Be aware of the following signs of infection and seek medical attention if any of these signs appear.

- Sore throat or new mouth sore
- Fever
- Chills and sweats
- Shortness of breath
- Change in cough or a new cough
- Nasal congestion
- Stiff neck in combination with other signs
- Burning or pain with urination
- Unusual vaginal discharge or irritation
- Increased urination
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Pain in the abdomen or rectum
- New onset of pain
- Redness, soreness, warmth or swelling in any area, including surgical wounds and ports
- Red streaks extending from an affected area
- Drainage of pus from any area

Does an infection affect my treatment?

If you wake up with a fever, aches and pains on a day that you are scheduled to have an infusion, please reschedule your appointment. If you are taking immunosuppressive medication at home, hold your dose if you have or suspect you have an active infection. Ensure you see your family physician or after hours clinic to assess if an antibiotic is needed. Your infection must be clear to have your treatment. We do not want long lapses between treatments so check with your physician if you are unsure if your infection has cleared.