

Making Friends With Fever

Fever: we flush, we sweat, we swoon. Our systems seem out of control. And yet, research, experience, and my trust in our miraculous design all tell me that fever is a beneficial, indeed brilliant and complex adaptive response by our immune systems, in most circumstances. Why then do so many people see fever as an enemy to be demolished as quickly as possible? Fever is primarily a beneficial adaptation to illness, controlled by the immune system with amazing sophistication: simply raising body temperature kills many microorganisms; it also decreases availability of minerals needed for bacterial and viral replication, and at the same time, heat increases production of cells needed to mobilize the immune response. It is not a failure of the body, but a strategic response of genius.

One of the reasons I am concerned about the elimination of childhood diseases such as chicken pox, measles, etc., and the fevers that accompany them, is that I have always believed they are an integral part of developing a healthy immune system, and that getting through illness and high fevers when young is crucial for later health, as well as stimulating growth and development immediately after. Although there is much in both research and observation to bear this out, research was published linking incidence of at least two fevers over 101° in the first year of life to markedly reduced incidence of allergies and asthma later on. The research points to reduced exposure to infections as one of the reasons we are seeing so much more allergy and asthma in kids.

Yet I am also increasingly aware that fever in a fundamentally healthy person is not the same as fever in a chronically ill or less

healthy person. If one is unhealthy to begin with, the process can harm the territory as much or more than the invader. Like it or not, living an unhealthy lifestyle that includes too many refined carbs and too much emotional and physical stress, lack of good nutrition and lack of exercise, not only makes us more prone to getting sick, but also more prone to difficulties when we need a fever to clear our system of unhealthy microorganisms. Although a beneficial response, fever is also a great stress on the body. It is costly energetically, and very demanding physically. At any given time, there is a given amount of stress we can handle without producing symptoms. The better care you take of yourself overall, the more stress you can handle without additional symptoms and the less likely the energetic "cost" of fever will tip your system toward further breakdown. This breakdown takes the form of secondary infections and complications.

So assuming you are fundamentally healthy, what should you do to treat a fever? Remember, temperature increase of a few degrees, by itself, is neither painful or dangerous. People enjoy the warmth of a few extra degrees of body temp when it comes from working out, a roaring fire, a hot bath, or a vigorous hike. Perhaps, rather than suppressing the fever with Tylenol and the like, we would be better off fueling our body with calcium, magnesium, vitamin C, zinc, extra protein, taurine and glutamine, all of which are depleted during the acute phase fever response. Body aches, muscle cramps, loss of appetite and general malaise are all symptoms associated with excessive stress response and the depletion of these nutrients. Given that situation, ideal supplementation for fever might include electrolytes, easily digested protein drinks, a Ca/Mg supplement, and

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glutamine. You could also use immune enhancing supplements such as Echinacea, mushroom extracts and arabinogalactans.

Specific products, if you want to stock up, might include *Electrolyte Synergy* for minerals, *L-glutamine powder* to reduce aches and pain; *Whey Cool* or *Dairy Free PaleoMeal* for easy-to-digest, good tasting protein; *Immunitone* capsules or *ImunoGalactans* powder. These can be ordered from me or from www.mossnutrition.com. I also recommend Epsom Salts for your bath; a fresh-made broth with lots of garlic, onions, sea salt, root vegetables, and greens; tea with raw local honey, fresh ginger, and a pinch of cayenne; and of course, lots of extra rest, sleep and fluids.

Fran Sussman

Sussman Holistic Svcs, Inc.

845-496-0385

<http://www.fransussman.com>

<mailto:fran@fransussman.com>

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