

## Immune Boosting for Pregnant Women

Midwives focus on prevention as one of the best ways to prevent illness. Maintaining a strong immune system is the foundation of prevention. Our immune system is the way our body fights off infection. It is our own personal medicine cabinet that activates before we even reach for the pill or tincture bottle. Here is a list of simple ways to boost your immune system. Choose a few that resonate with you and that can easily be added to your life.

### General Guidelines:

- Wash your hands frequently. Additionally, if you work with the public, consider using alcohol based wipes on your hands.

### Healthy Diet- food as the first medicine

- Eat plenty of vegetables and whole grains
- Be vigilant about protein intake and make 75 grams a day your goal.
- Drink plenty of water 8-10 glasses a day (throw some lemon juice in as a liver tonic)
- Sit down to eat and chew your food thoroughly (this helps get the digestive enzymes going to ensure good digestion)

### Supplements-

- Take a whole food based Prenatal Vitamin. (New Chapter, Thorn, Rainbow Light)
- Vitamin C- in addition to the vitamin C your PN vitamin contains, add more in the form of citrus fruit, dark green leafy vegetables. You can take up to 1000 mg per day.
- Supplement with Vitamin D3 (liquid or gel capsule types). Up to 1,000 IU/day- Vitamin D is thought to boost immune function and reduce inflammation.

### Regular Exercise-

- The lymphatic system works in conjunction with the immune system- it transports white blood cells in the body and stimulates the immune response. The lymphatic system is "pumpless," meaning that it circulates only with bodily activity. This is one reason exercise is considered such an important aspect of overall health.
- Walk at least 4-5 times a week, twenty minutes a day is an excellent way to keep the heart, lymph and immune systems healthy as well as strengthen the pelvic floor muscles essential for labor.
- Dry brushing your body also moves lymph and improves circulation- you can get a dry brush at a Co-op or any beauty supply store.
- Prenatal Yoga will gently exercise your body, focus on the muscle groups most used in labor and help alleviate some of the discomforts of pregnancy. It can also help reduce stress.

### Stress Reduction-

- No matter how busy your day, try to carve some time out to **do something that relaxes you**- this could be walking, having a cup of tea, reading, taking a hot bath, meditation, art projects, etc. Even just a half an hour can do wonders.
- **Take a deep breath.** Utilize your breath as a tool. It is the fastest, cheapest and most immediate way to calm the nerves.
- Think positively. "I am healthy and strong" or "My body is vibrant and healthy."