

## **Our Internal Warrior – The Immune System**

You wake up and notice throughout the day that you're not feeling quite right. You wake up and still feel tired. You feel an odd sensation in your body. Your throat is a bit scratchy. You may even notice your glands near your ears are a bit tender or even swollen. I call this the eewy jeewies or that punky feeling. I know when I feel this way that my immune system is weak and I am at the tipping point for illness. My awareness of this feeling tells me I need to take care of myself with diet, exercise and stress management. I may need to rest, increase my Vitamin C by eating fresh fruits and vegetables. I may even crave oranges or foods with the vitamins my body needs. I notice I don't crave my normal cup of coffee. Instead I want a cup of hot tea. At lunch I want hot soup. Our bodies are amazing. If we pay attention, we will get warning that our immune system wants to work for us.

What is it that prevents us from getting sick? And when we do get sick, what is this marvelous system that helps us heal. It is our immune system. This system is working all the time, whether we are sick or well. It is a system of specialized organs and cells. The organs are the thymus gland, lymph nodes, spleen, and bone marrow. The cells are white blood cells, T cells, called T helper cells and T killer cells, and B cells. These cells are smart and know when germs or foreign particles don't belong. They all have a job and work together to fight organisms that cause disease. They are living breathing cells. Each cell has a job, much like an army.

To boost the power of your immune system you need to eat a healthy diet full of fresh vegetables and fruits, limit simple sweet sugary foods, and increase pure water and liquids. Your body needs to rest if you get sick, but to avoid illness and keep the immune system strong you need to keep your body strong with exercise and play. Most of all you need to do a mind check. There is power in positive thinking. Laughter, smiling and joy increase immunity. Conflict, sadness and pessimism weaken immunity. Daily meditation and listening prayer reduce the frenzy of thoughts in our mind and lessen stress, thus improving function of this powerful internal warrior. Funny that for this warrior system to fight illness, it helps to have a peaceful heart and mind.

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