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I TRAVEL TO YOU"**

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# Stay Healthy Holistically This Winter

By Kristen Porter, MAC, LAc,  
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It is that time of year...winter is coming and so is cold and flu season. But that doesn't mean we have to forgo fabulous parties or develop OCD tendencies to stay healthy! Embracing a holistic approach simply means to take into account the body, the mind and the spirit. A holistic approach is deeply rooted in a trust that our body inherently knows how to support a health immune system and by keeping our energy balanced, this can occur naturally.

Our best defense is strengthening your immune system. You've heard it all before: improving your diet, increasing your sleep, and developing good habits such as frequent hand washing will all help. One of the easiest things we can do is to boost our immune system through the food we eat. Stock up on oily fish like salmon, herring, mackerel. Mix seaweeds (kombu, Wakame, Nori, Arame), miso and mushrooms (Shiitake, Reishi & Maitake) into your soups, salads, and stir fries. Snack on nuts especially pumpkin seeds, chestnuts and walnuts. Spice up your cooking with warming herbs like garlic, ginger and cloves. Try to avoid energetically cold foods such as raw salads, uncooked vegetables and iced beverages.

Acupuncture works to nourish the underlying immune energy, called Wei Qi, (pronounced 'way chee') which travels throughout your body. It consists of inserting thin disposable needles along various points in the body. This stimulates the body's natural energy, enhancing the body's self-healing processes and restoring balance.

Acupuncture developed over 3,000 years ago in China, and though tradi-

tionally used as a preventive form of health care, since the mid-1970's it has been widely used in the United States to treat a variety of common ailments, relieve pain, and promote general health. Most people find treatments to be deeply relaxing and restorative. If the economy has got you blue, many clinics now offer very affordable community style acupuncture around the same price as an insurance co-pay.

Acupressure or Shiatsu is a technique you can learn to self-administer. It is a Japanese bodywork style that uses gentle thumb/palm pressure and passive stretches, to assist your body in balancing its energetic system. Many practitioners can provide an "instructional shiatsu" session during which you will be taught how to perform acupressure on yourself. Or if you'd prefer the nurturing care of another, bring a partner to learn, too.

Chinese herbs, which have shown to be anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and anti-inflammatory, should be prescribed only by a licensed herbalist because they are very powerful. After consultation, the herbalist will create an individual combination of herbs to best meet your needs and to strengthen your immune system. Herbs often come in powdered formulas and are mixed with warm water and taken as a tea. Be prepared, this is medicine, and won't taste like a cup of chamomile!

If you do find yourself with symptoms of cold or flu, treatment can decrease severity and speed up healing time. However, early intervention is key as the sooner treatment is received the faster and more effective it will be.

Stay healthy holistically this year and you will be amazed by your body's own defenses!

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