

Coronavirus – Ways That We Can Help Our Patients

We have seen a huge focus in the media on preventive hygiene measures. Also, immune boosting focusing on sufficient sleep and reducing stress.

There may be more that we can do to help our patients. In addition to acupuncture and Chinese herbal treatments for boosting the immune system, here are a number of self-care suggestions.

Additional prevention measures

Just as handwashing with soap and water and disinfecting surfaces seems to eliminate the virus, cleaning the nasal passages with saline, gargling with an antiseptic mouthwash and rinsing the eyes with saline solution in an eye cup may have a similar effect. These techniques stem from teaching of Kiiko Matsumoto that I received 25-30 years ago.

While this may or may not have scientifically researched studies, I've been using the above method with my acupuncture patients for the past 25 years for treatment of colds and flu. If people do this at the first onset of colds and flu, many of them will stop having symptoms. I recommend doing this as soon as possible after potential exposure and every time that one washes hands. I accompany this with treatment with Chinese herbs and acupuncture.

Immune compromised patients who work in settings with extensive exposure and who have been getting sick with colds and flu multiple times per season (teachers, public health workers) have used these protocols and are not getting sick at all.

Since hygiene treatments for preventing the coronavirus are similar to the flu, this method might apply also.

The most effective method involves flushing the nasal passages with either a neti pot or a squeeze bottle or syringe. All are available in pharmacies or from Amazon. Saline sprays (available in pharmacies) are helpful but not as useful since they do not flush the area as completely as do the other methods. Other nasal irrigation techniques work well also.

My theory is that when we either inhale a droplet of infected moisture or touch a surface that may have infected material and touch our eyes or nose, the infected material does not instantly pass into our sinuses or lungs. It sits in our nasal passages, on our eyes or in our throat. With each inhalation, more of that infected material passes into our respiratory system. Eventually, enough has entered our respiratory system to overwhelm our body's defenses and we get sick. To prevent this, doing a nasal cleanse and antiseptic gargle whenever we are exposed to infected substance quickly limits the exposure.

Breath

We can assist people by helping them with their breath. Balancing the breath tends to balance the nervous system and helps people deal with the stresses and fear that are abundant currently. In addition, working with the breath will tend to strengthen the lungs and respiratory system.

All qigong, tai chi and yoga practices are helpful. To balance the breath, I have been suggesting practices that focus on balancing the inhale and exhale. To achieve a fuller and deeper breath, diaphragmatic/belly breathing with lung/chest breathing is very helpful.

Fear

Most of the news about the Coronavirus focuses on how many people are sick and have died. In addition to the fear that this creates, we know that anything that we focus on tends to have a more likely tendency to come to pass.

Conversely, if one believes something positive is going to happen, it increases the possibility of that happening. Positive imagery/visualizations and affirmations will help to dispel the negative impressions that are abundant in the media.

The current situation is taking away control from our lives. Giving our patients positive things to do helps to empower them and to feel more in control.

Malvin Finkelstein, OMD, L.Ac, Dipl. O.M. has been practicing acupuncture for over 40 years. He is a former chairperson of the NCCAOM, NQA (National Qigong Association) and the Oregon Medical Board's Acupuncture Committee. He developed and teaches Acu-Current classes that combine microcurrent electricity with new acupuncture points in the fascia around muscles, tendons, ligaments to reposition muscles and joints into their correct position. Classes are available live and online - <https://acu-current.com/>