

Stress & Immunity

All threats to our health are thwarted by a strong immune system. Thus, at a time when significant energy is spent on crisis planning, we need to remember self-care. If we are run down, our physical depletion can leave us susceptible to illness. Our greatest risk of dis-ease comes from being unable to fight off infections. Consider these five pillars of health:

Sleep: It's critical get quality rest. Turn your cell phone off before lying in bed and ease into your day before checking your messages. Instead of watching television in bed, spend a few minutes meditating or imagining a past vacation or favorite spot you feel peaceful in. Deep and consistent sleep is what allows the body to restore and prepare for new challenges.

Nutrition: This is the time to decrease sugar, processed foods, and low nutrient foods. Increase your consumption of berries, nuts, seeds, mushrooms, and beans. A combination of raw and cooked organic foods is critical for micronutrients like minerals, vitamins, antioxidants and phytochemicals, which build our immune system. Our immune system is located in our small intestine, so what we eat matters.

Stress: As caregivers and organizational leaders, remember you are not responsible for solving all problems. Your job is to create processes for others to help take ownership to share the burden. Let go of what you can't control and make sure to attend to process over outcome. Stress can use up important nutrients we need to stay healthy.

Peace: During crisis we need to make time for peace. Peace comes from feeling grounded, connected to our own experiences, others, and nature. Appreciate the little things like the smells and sounds of nature, getting out of our heads and into our bodies. Attending to sensations prevents us from being stuck in our head.

Relationships: Ensuring a healthy balance between giving and receiving is paramount to maintaining our energy stores. If we are giving too much, with a low return on investment, it's time to consider how we might alter the way we help or change our perception of what we get from helping. Deep meaningful contact with other fuels our sense of well-being.

Fun: Laughter produces happiness, triggering neurotransmitters generation manufactured in our gut. This aids in digestion, allowing more nutrients to be absorbed into the bloodstream and conserving those stress hormones like cortisol, which activate our defenses. The more joy we find in our everyday the less hard our body has to work and the better able we can fight infection.