SUGGESTIONS TO PREVENT INFECTION AND REMAIN HEALTHY
IN TIMES OF CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

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The majority of the countries in the world have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has equally impacted developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries. Treatment of COVID-19 patients with severe symptoms is medically intensive and economically expensive. Even the most developed countries of the world do not have enough resources to fight this pandemic. In this situation, the best option would be focusing on how to prevent infection and if one gets infected, taking care that it does not become severe.

Nisargopachar Kendra is working for maintenance of health with holistic approach. In last few days, we have received many queries about natural remedies for prevention of the disease in the current situation. There is good amount of information about how to prevent spread of virus. However, there is lack of enough literature about how to improve our immunity and make our body strong to resist the virus with the holistic approach involving diet, exercise and mind. In this context, we have prepared this article about care and precautions to be observed to remain healthy with holistic approach in the current situation. This article is abstracted after review of published literature by authentic organizations and knowledge of a few Ayurvedic experts apart from experts from our own team. Dr. Minoobhai Parabia, a renowned scholar on herbal medicine, has suggested a herbal decoction for health protection. The recipe for the same is also included here. Dr. B. M. Palan has prepared an audio for auto-suggestions, titled as “Body Mind Relaxation for Strengthening Immunity”. His write-up is also included here. Thus, an article useful in the current difficult times is prepared with joint efforts of many doctors. I hope this will be beneficial to many.

This write-up is prepared by a team of doctors to help people take care of their own health in the present situation. Please note that this is not substitute for doctors’ advice. The reader is advised to consult his / her doctor in case of any disease or ill-health related condition. It is also advisable that one consults an expert for his / her long term diet plan.

March 31, 2020

Dr. Bharat Shah
Hygiene Related Suggestions for Protection against Corona Virus

- Cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue paper, while coughing or sneezing. Throw tissue paper into closed dust bin immediately after use. Use handkerchief, if tissue paper is not handy.

- Practice social distancing. Keep a minimum distance of 1 meter, preferably of 2 meters, from any person. Do not visit crowded places.

- Avoid shaking hands. Greet persons with folded palms, say Namaste.

- Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth without washing hands.

- Wash hands with soap and water with following acts. To wash hands, apply soap and rub properly all parts of hands with foam for at least 20 seconds. Use sanitizer only if water and soap are not available. Please note that sanitizer is not effective on dirty or greasy hands.
  - After coughing and sneezing
  - After attending to sick person
  - Before, during and after preparing food
  - Before eating food
  - After toilet use
  - When hands are visibly dirty
  - After handling wastes and animals
  - After handling items used by sick persons

- Avoid touching items which are frequently touched by many, e.g. door handle, elevator buttons, railing of stairs, vehicle handles, etc. If feasible, get your work done without using palm and fingers. Handkerchief, mobile phone, computer key board, mouse, key chain, purse, pen, napkins, glass, etc. should be kept exclusively personal and do not touch or use such items of others. Avoid using others’ vehicles. However, if you are required to touch or use them, do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth without cleaning your hands with soap & water or sanitizer.

- Avoid going out of home except in the emergency. If you are required to go out, use shower cap or rain cap. After returning home, avoid touching or sitting anywhere without washing hands with soap and water. It is advisable to take bath using soap straightaway and change cloths. If taking bath is not possible, at least change cloths and wash hands and face with soap. Discard shower cap properly into the closed dust
bin. Wash the rain cap properly with soapy water. Wash cloths after soaking into hot water and dry them under sun.

- Cloths or bags brought from outside may contain infected droplets. Do not shake or ruffle such items inside home. Virus infected droplets may disperse and settle down on furniture surfaces.

- Wash vegetables brought from outside in salt water and clean them.

- Always use mask, if you are sick or required to go near a sick person.

- Avoid smoking.

- Avoid spitting in public places.

- Try to get work completed without inviting outsiders into the house. Delivery persons of milk, fruits, vegetables, newspaper, cooking gas cylinders, etc. can carry microbes, as they visit many houses.

- If someone in family is suffering from fever, cough or cold, keep them in separate room. Maintain social distancing, even if allocating a separate room is not possible. Wash hands properly with soap or with sanitizer each time after attending them. Disinfect door handles, stoppers, bathroom taps, table, phone, etc. with Sodium Hypochlorite solution or sanitizer. Bed sheets, pillows, blankets and matresses should be exposed to sun on regular basis. Take such care for minimum 7 days from beginning of symptoms or till they disappear totally.

- Extra care should be taken to protect persons of old age and those suffering from Diabetes or Cardiac or Respiratory diseases.
What can be done to improve Self-defence and Immunity?

To improve self-defence and immunity, one needs to pay attention to a holistic lifestyle involving diet (Ahar), daily routine & exercise (Vihar) and mind (Manovyaapar).

**Diet (Ahar):**

The following tips will help, directly or indirectly, improve digestion and maintain immunity against any disease.

1. Have a balanced diet consisting required nutrients including moderate consumption of fruits and vegetables rich in Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Flavonoids, and other antioxidants.
2. Do not over-eat. Do not eat more than your appetite and in excess of digestive capacity.
3. Avoid eating frequently. Taking food more than 3 or 4 times a day may weaken the digestive fire.
4. Have an easy to digest meal. Avoid fried foods, sweets, eggs, and meat. (Detailed information about food items easy or difficult to digest is given in Appendix – 3)
5. Be regular with your mealtimes. Take dinner before sunset.
6. Avoid outside food.
7. Avoid ice-creams, cold-drinks, refrigerated water, curd, cold or stale food, food items made of refined wheat flour, bakery items, packed or junk food.
8. Eating home cooked, fresh, warm, and easy to digest food helps to maintain immunity to fight disease.

**Daily Routine & Exercise (Vihar):**

1. Maintain personal hygiene and cleanliness in the home and surrounding environment.
2. Take adequate rest and sleep.
3. Do not stay awake late in the night. Do not take an afternoon nap, especially after lunch.
4. Exercise regularly.

5. Breathe deeply for 3-4 minutes twice a day. Kapalbhati and Pranayama can also be done, if one has been trained for the same.

6. Put two drops of Sesame oil or ghee in both the nostrils (nasya) and also apply with little finger.

7. Ensure adequate ventilation and sunlight in the house.

8. Allow your body to get exposed to sunrays for a few minutes in the morning. Take sunbath.

**Mental Activities (Manovyapar):**

It is proved beyond doubt that our thoughts and emotions have profound impact on our body. Psychological stress and negative emotions like fear and insecurity have negative impact on body and self-defence mechanism. It is natural that a fast spreading pandemic like COVID-19 may cause mental and emotional stress.

Following is a list of symptoms that suggests psychological stress. Even if one does not suffer from any symptoms of stress, regular practice of Yoga, Pranayama, Yog-nidra or any one of the relaxation techniques, positive auto-suggestions and daily prayer will help maintain our immunity and self-defence system.

**Symptoms of Mental and Emotional Stress:**

1. Anxiety, fear and feeling of numbness.

2. Anger or short-temperedness.

3. Loss of appetite.

4. Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images.

5. Difficulty concentrating.

6. Lethargy or changes in energy level.

7. Digestive disorders.

8. Physical reactions, such as headaches or body pains.

9. Worsening of chronic health problems, eg. Hypertension or Diabetes.

10. Increase use of addictive substances such as tobacco, smoking, alcohol or drugs.
What can be done to control Stress?

1. Eat healthy & balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate sleep.
2. Connect with others. Share your concerns and how you are feeling with your family members or friends.
3. Talk to the friends or relatives having a positive attitude over phone.
4. Stay informed. When you feel that you are missing information, you may become more stressed or nervous. Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from official sources. Be aware that there may be rumors during a crisis, especially on social media. Always check your sources and turn to reliable sources of information.
5. Avoid too much exposure to news. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeated.
6. Get engaged with enjoyable and interesting activities.
7. Take breaks. Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Try taking in deep breaths.
8. Practice Yogasana and Pranayama.
9. Regular practice of any one of the relaxation techniques like Shavasana, Yoga-nidra, Breath-watching, Progressive Muscular Relaxation, Meditation and the like.
10. Use positive auto-suggestion to strengthen immunity. One such guided Body-Mind Relaxation session with auto-suggestions for strengthening immunity has been prepared by Dr. B. M. Palan. Please refer Appendix-1 for the details.
11. Pray regularly and have unwavering faith in God. Pray for well being, peace, harmony and happiness of humans and all the living beings of the universe.
HERBAL DECOCTIONS

Use any one of the following decoctions mentioned below. Herbal decoctions are used for maintaining self-defence system by enhancing the immunity. They are also used for treatment of common cold. Please do not remain under any misconception that this decoction is suggestion for the treatment against Corona Virus infection. It is desirable to continue these decoctions, if you have symptoms of Fever, Cough, Cold or Flu, but please do so after consulting your doctor. If you are suffering from any other disease or you are on any medication, take herbal decoction after consulting your doctor. Sudarshan Ghanvati is generally used in substitute of these herbal decoctions, but please consult your doctor before taking any medicines.

1. **Arogya-Rakshak Kadha (Decoction for health protection):**

   Some of the herbs used for this decoction have anti-viral, immuno-enhancing and bio-availability enhancing properties. Please refer Appendix – 2 for the detailed recipe.

2. **Dried Ginger Powder-Black Pepper-Basil leaf Decoction:**

   One can make this herbal decoction with ingredients readily available at home, if it is difficult to get herbs used in *Arogya-Rakshak Kadha*.

   Boil half teaspoon dried ginger powder, powder of two black pepper seeds, ten basil leaves, and half teaspoon turmeric powder in one glass of water. You can have this decoction 2-3 times a day.
What can be done if one has fever, cough, cold or difficulty in breathing?

1. Do not panic, as every fever, cough, or cold may not be COVID-19. And majority of persons infected by Corona virus will not become serious. At the same time, donot become careless about the same.

2. Follow the current guidelines of health authorities of your country about the next step viz. staying at home, getting tests done or consulting a doctor, etc.

3. Make sincere efforts and follow the advice mentioned earlier to keep mind calm and cheerful.

4. Isolate yourself from other family members. Observe cleanliness and hygine related suggestions more meticulously. Use face mask.

5. Stay at home. Do not go out except for the medical reasons.

6. Take adequate rest and sleep.

7. Be extra cautious to eat light and easily digestible, frees and warm food.

8. Drink water boiled with dried ginger powder. Put two teaspoons of dried ginger powder in two liters of water and boil it to half.

9. Take adequate liquids. Take care not to get dehydrated.

10. Gargle with hot water mixed with turmeric and salt, twice or thrice a day.

11. Take steam inhalation after boiling around one litre of water mixed with half teaspoonful of Ajwain (Oumum), twice a day.

12. Immediately consult your doctor, if you experience difficulty in breathing or worsening of any other symptoms.
References:


https://www.mohfw.gov.in/


https://ayush.gujarat.gov.in/corona-virus-infection.htm


https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/


Appendix-1

Body-Mind Relaxation for Strengthening Immunity

"A tense mind can never exist in a relaxed body." There are many evidences indicating that the body (muscular) relaxation leads to relaxation of the mind. And while body and mind are relaxing, our positive (empowering) thoughts can create healthy psychological, biological and behavioural responses. In context of this scientific understanding, Dr. B. M. Palan has prepared audio recordings of guided Body-Mind Relaxation sessions with auto-suggestions for strengthening immunity.

The audio recordings are available in English, Hindi and Gujarati languages on website https://nisargopachar.org/audio or https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCguudSOWL3NN-kdYUJzBkw

One may use these recordings for doing her / his session twice a day, at any convenient time, in a comfortable position of the body, sitting on a recliner, sofa, chair, floor or lying on a bed with or without pillow.

Please avoid using these recordings where normal vigilance and alertness to one's surroundings are important, e.g. while driving a vehicle, riding a bicycle or working on a machine.

Please refer a list of studies provided in the reference section of this article for scientific evidences of this kind of therapy.
Appendix – 2

Recipe for Arogya Rakshak Kadha (Decoction for Health Protection)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr No.</th>
<th>Herb</th>
<th>Botanical Name</th>
<th>Quantity (For Five Persons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chirata</td>
<td>Swertia Chirata</td>
<td>5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kutaki (Hellebore)</td>
<td>Picrorhiza Kurroa</td>
<td>5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indian Tinospora</td>
<td>Tinospora Cordifolia</td>
<td>5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spiked Ginger Lily</td>
<td>Hedychium Spicatum</td>
<td>5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dry Ginger</td>
<td>Zinziber Officinalis</td>
<td>5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Indian Long Pepper Root</td>
<td>Piper Longum (Rhizome)</td>
<td>5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Purple Flebane</td>
<td>Centratherum Anthelminticum</td>
<td>5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Black Cumin</td>
<td>Nigella Sativa</td>
<td>5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ajwain (Omum)</td>
<td>Tachyspermum Ammii</td>
<td>5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Long Pepper Fruit</td>
<td>Piper Longum (Fruit)</td>
<td>2.5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Black Pepper</td>
<td>Piper Nigrum</td>
<td>2.5 gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50 gm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Soak mixture of all the herbs (50 gm) in one liter of water overnight (10 hours). The next day in the morning, boil the soaked mixture on mild flame till it remains one forth (250 ml). Serve 50 ml per person after straining. It serves five adults. If you have only four family members, then boil it more to make it 200 ml.
- If there are less than four members in the family, then reduce the quantity of herbs accordingly.
- It is better to consume decoction warm. Jaggary can be added, if required. One can also add honey, but only after cooling it down.
- Serve 25 ml to children less than 15 years of age.
- Avoid eating anything half an hour before and after having the decoction.
Appendix – 3

Food items: Easy or Difficult for Digestion

Whether any food item is easily digestible for a person or not depends upon person’s digestive capacity (gastric fire) and the properties of the food item. Other factors including whether the food is warm or cold, fresh or stale, quantity and density of food, time of the meal, and physical health and mental state of the person at the time of having meals also affect digestion. General instructions for diet have been mentioned earlier in this article. In this section, we have tried to provide a list of select food items classified as easy or difficult to digest (light or heavy on digestive system), based on their properties. Usually, after 2-3 hours of having a meal, if stomach becomes light and one feels hungry at the time of the next meal, then it is understood that the previous meal was easy to digest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grains</th>
<th>Easy to digest</th>
<th>Moderate to digest</th>
<th>Difficult to digest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice, Finger Millet (Ragi), Kodo Millet (Kodra), Sorghum (Jowar)</td>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>Wheat, Pearl Millet (Bajra)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grain becomes heavy on digestion by grinding it to flour, making the flour refined, frying, combining it with milk, curd, sugar or jaggery. Grains become easier to digest by cooking it by boiling the whole grains, roasting the grains, and making flour after roasting the grains. Boiled grains are easier to digest than fried ones and roasted grains are easier to digest than boiled ones. Grains from an year old crop are easier to digest compared to the one from fresh crops.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pulses</th>
<th>Easy to digest</th>
<th>Moderate to digest</th>
<th>Difficult to digest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green gram, Moth bean, Lentil, Horse gram</td>
<td>Bengal gram, Red gram, Peas</td>
<td>Black gram, Cow pea, Field bean, Soya bean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pulses become easier to digest by increasing the liquidity of Dal, cooking them with moderate spices, and boiling them properly. Pulses become difficult to digest by making the preparation thicker, frying and adding jaggery, sugar, curd or flour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Easy to digest</th>
<th>Moderate to digest</th>
<th>Difficult to digest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottle gourd, Brinjal, Pointed gourd, Silk squash, Ridge gourd, Drumstick, Bitter gourd, Onion, Carrot, Green amaranth, Fenugreek</td>
<td>Pumpkin, Cluster bean, Spinach</td>
<td>Potato, Sweet potato, Ladies finger, Pink bean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vegetables become heavier on digestion by adding more fat like oil or ghee, curd or flour and by frying. Vegetables become easier to digest by seasoning with moderate spices, by boiling to remove excess water, by roasting directly in the fire, by boiling in water without covering the vessel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruits</th>
<th>Easy to digest</th>
<th>Moderate to digest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pomegranate, Indian gooseberry, Pear, Papaya, Sapodilla</td>
<td>Grapes, Mangoes, Dates, Figs, Coconut, Banana, Guava, Custard apple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milk Products</th>
<th>Easy to digest</th>
<th>Moderate to digest</th>
<th>Difficult to digest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goat’s milk and Curd, buttermilk made from Goat’s milk, buttermilk made from Cow’s milk</td>
<td>Cow’s milk</td>
<td>Curd made from Cow’s milk, Buffalo’s milk, buttermilk and curd made from Buffalo’s milk (very heavy on digestion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fried food items, Dairy sweets, food items with excess fat like oil or ghee, cold food items, food items made from refined wheat flour, bread and bakery products, non-vegetarian food items like eggs, chicken, and beef are heavy or very heavy on digestion. Grains, Pulses and Vegetables become easier to digest by seasoing with spices like Coriander, Cumin, Ajwain (Oumum), Garlic, Ginger, Dry Ginger and other similar spices.