



## 10 Tips for Autumn Health

from Elson Haas MD

**1. As with the gardens, open up to the harvest of your year** from the seeds you have planted for your life, and be willing to work hard and discipline yourself as you head into a new season. If you are a student (we are all students of life), get back to your studies. Yes, it is time to shift from the fun and laziness of summer. Nature is so giving, and it helps to be receptive to her and what the Earth has to offer. What do we have to give to life for all the energy, love, and beauty I hope we all receive?

**2. The foundation and fortification with our Foods and Diet are an important focus now.** Again, this is Harvest time and there are a great many foods—apples and walnuts, sunflower seeds, zucchini and other squash, cabbages, peppers and tomatoes, plus many grains and beans. Learn some new recipes and enjoy good foods. Most of us need more protein and heat generating foods in the colder months, even the energizing spicy peppers such as cayenne and chilies. This will keep our blood and energy moving.

**3. Exercise activity is crucial now as in any season.** As the weather cools, stretching is even more important, as is having indoor exercises we can do. Yoga and other flexibility-enhancing movements are helpful at keeping us youthful. Remember, we feel as young as our spine is flexible. Our weight work and aerobic activities are vital to staying fit and toned, and strong to support our immune function and circulation. A vital body rarely gets sick.

**4. Nutritional supplements are often useful this time of year.** Many of my patients add some nutrients that support immune function so as not to pick up whatever is going around as the weather cools.

- Taking some echinacea now is helpful, as is the Chinese herb, astragalus.
- Some people prefer the use of mushrooms such as maitake and reishi for immune support.
- Maintaining daily vitamins C and E along with selenium and zinc is also immune protective and helps clear our body of certain toxins.
- Roots are helpful at tonifying our body at this time. Ginseng is good for building strength and endurance. Burdock root is good for the skin and lungs, an area of focus for this season.
- See the Autumn section of my book [\*Staying Healthy with the Seasons\*](#) for more information.

**5. Detoxification is a good idea for early autumn** and can provide a great benefit. I typically do a 3-week cleanse program myself every September and also lead a class for my patients. Can you take a break from some of your routine habits, like caffeine, alcohol, or sugar? Doing an effective Detox Diet or avoiding sugar, wheat and dairy for a couple weeks (as I write about in *The False Fat Diet* book) is often quite revealing and helps us to feel better, lighter and more youthful with greater energy. Since it is getting cooler this season, we will need to exercise and use a sauna or steam as a means to enhance sweat and clear toxins. Regular sweating is important to health and longevity.

**You can go to the Education section of my clinic's website ([here](#)) for the latest information on both in-person and online Detox classes.**

**6. Prepare for the cold season.** Gather your fuel and food, breathe, and exercise, as you should. In Chinese medicine, the fall season focuses on the lungs and large intestine. Overdoing it can lead to congestion and toxicity, as well as constipation and the clogging of the nose and sinuses. This leads then to upper respiratory infections as the germs grow in the mucus and then inflame the membranes. Staying clean and clear this season along with a healthy immune system will help keep you well. Try a facial steam and breathe in the herbal mist (you can use mints, rosemary, chamomile, lemon verbena, and other herbs) to help clear the sinuses.

**7. Relationships are important to all of us.** This is a good time to deepen and clarify our love and family connections. This helps us discover more about our own needs and those close to us, as well as learn to listen to them (both the needs and the people). Also, learn to be alone and listen to your inner guidance and truth. Some folks focus relationships on their computers and TV, car or other electronic devices. Can you still your mind chatter, and let your body breathe deeply to your soul? Give it a try and your spirit will be calmed and can also fly free of the burdens of time.

**8. Open to the creative Spirit.** We can receive new ideas and actions necessary to

fulfill our purpose and move us forward in our life. This can help to improve motivation with new energy and excitement for life. This could be writing about past experiences or our future goals, working on a book or personal story, reading a self-help book and applying it to improve our life, or taking up a new exercise. In other words, start a program now that you can develop and work on into the colder, darker months.

**9. Take a rest now because the demanding holiday season is just around the corner.** Do not burn your batteries out before November. Kindle your inner flame and firepower, which will protect you from the invasion of harsh climates and germs. The winter blues come partly from a loss of this fire energy. Shifting and balancing with the Seasons is vital to Staying Healthy.

**10. Finally, should you get a cold or the flu, it is best to take action quickly.**

- I start with 500-1,000 mg of vitamin C hourly.
- Increased doses of vitamin A (not beta-carotene) 25,000 –30,000 IUs 3 times daily for just 3–4 days and then lower that dosage to 10 –20,000 IUs twice daily for about a week (then take a break since excess vitamin A can be toxic if taken too long).
- I also use fresh garlic - several cloves at a time dipped in honey and chewed; I may repeat this several times the first day. That is a spicy and aromatic natural antibiotic and immune defender; you can alternately use the odorless garlic caps, several three times daily if you do not want to smell, but they are not quite as effective. You can alternatively press several cloves of garlic into your bowl of soup before you eat, instead of eating the garlic straight.
- Echinacea and goldenseal alcohol extract can also be used to support immunity and cleanse and disinfect the membranes.
- Some help may be achieved with olive leaf extract as a mild anti-viral herb.
- Of course, drink lots of water, herbal teas, and hot soup.