

A wooden honey dipper is shown dripping honey into a glass jar. The honey is thick and golden, creating a stream that falls into the jar. The background is dark, making the honey and the dipper stand out.

# YOUR WINTER MEDICINE CABINET

with easy recipes for a healthy season including  
Syrup, Broth, Wellness Shots & Elixir, Fire Cider

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I'm Jo and live in north Dorset near the hilltop town of Shaftesbury, famous for that 70s Hovis ad. Here I run my clinic, Balance Naturopathic Nutrition, along with two shepherds huts for seasonal glamping. My passions are natural health, long walks, art galleries, live music and spending time with my family.

I fell into a career change in my 40s after struggling with a re-emergence of chronic asthma, and undertook nutritional study at the College of Natural Medicine in Bristol for three years. Previously I studied Art History and worked creatively. Believe it or not common threads can be drawn between these seemingly disparate fields ~ understanding the human experience! I love what I do, to see clients transform and to create awareness of the fact that there is so much that we can do to support and nourish ourselves. I feel passionately that our daily habits including diet, lifestyle and environment create health or coupled with genetics can lead to dysfunction and then sadly chronic complaints. My advice to clients, the best prescription we can give ourselves is the life we live. Also, soon to be a Naturopath.

**The contents of this eBook are for information only and are intended to assist readers in enhancing their immunity over winter. It is not intended to be a substitute for taking proper medical advice and should not be relied upon in this way. Always consult a qualified doctor or health practitioner if you are concerned about any symptoms you are experiencing.**



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## Seasonal changes

As busy women juggling life it's easy to forget to prioritise health with our immune systems inevitably taking a hit, particularly over the winter months. Transitioning into autumn and winter brings with it a surge of change but if we continue to live at our summer pace we can suffer unnecessary colds and burnout. Autumn is a time of bounty, harvest, community and connectedness when the rewards of hard work are reaped. Whilst winter is a time of introversion, reflection and stillness with the gesture of curling up contained within it. Each season these seasonal archetypal qualities can be reflected in our our daily rhythm. Whilst you might be someone who embraces these changes a strong immune system is essential.

## Immune system

Your immune system represents a complex, dynamic relationship between you and the outside world. The environment of your unique internal system is called the terrain. Holistic philosophy focuses on more than just killing germs; it respects and supports your entire immune system's ecology. Germs are ever-present and will always evolve, but the strength of your terrain will predict whether you get sick at all and how long you may be feeling under the weather if you do.

'Your food shall be your medicine' said Hippocrates, father of medicine, several hundred years ago. This is as relevant today as it was then. The healthy working of our immune systems can be made harder by our terrain, which is determined by diet, level of stress, exercise, attitude, inflammation, chronic disease, genetics and exposure to environmental toxins. If you're experiencing yet another cold then the best thing you can do is to optimise your terrain and in this eBook I'm going to tell you how with easy to follow guidance and homemade recipes for immune boosting syrup, lemon ginger wellness shots and wellness elixir, and chicken broth, as well as nutrient suggestions.

Powerful natural compounds can be found in many herbs and foods which can help both support and stimulate our immune system and it's important to consume an array of these foods on a daily/weekly basis. Insufficient intake of immune-supporting nutrients often leads to an increased vulnerability to illness and a decrease in resistance to infections.



## One

### Foods rich in vitamin C

Vitamin C increases the production of infection-fighting white blood cells, antibodies and increases levels of interferons which prevent the entry of viruses. The body is unable to store this vitamin so to maintain adequate levels a daily intake is needed. Fruits and vegetables containing vitamin C are:

- Brussel sprouts
- Raspberries
- Citrus (orange, lemon, clementine, grapefruit)
- Curly kale
- Kiwi
- Blackcurrants
- Broccoli
- Mango
- Strawberries
- Peppers

A great deal of vitamin C is lost during cooking so where possible minimally cook eg. stir-fry or lightly steam. Lemons are an amazing source of vitamin C because they have a cleansing and alkalisng effect on the body. This helps remove toxins and maintain health. Drink lemon juice in warm water or add it to foods such as yoghurt and curry, or why not try the immune boosting Ginger Wellness Shot (see page 6 for an easy recipe).



## Two

### Fresh ginger

Fresh ginger helps kill bacteria, parasites and the cold virus and is a strong antioxidant. It also has anti-inflammatory properties which help reduce sinus congestion. Lovely infused in hot water (grate a piece into a mug) or added to fresh juices or why not cook with it, fresh ginger really is a wonder food.

## Liquid boosts for those colder months

### Lemon Ginger Wellness Shots

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Take a 25ml shot in the morning on an empty stomach for an ultimate immune system boost.

#### INGREDIENTS

**100g of fresh ginger root (peeled and finely chopped). Rich in phytonutrients which are antioxidants, anti-inflammatory, and antibacterial.**

**Juice of 5 lemons. High in vitamin C and helps to cleanse and detox the liver.**

**2 tbps local honey, this is optional but I always add it.**

**Water (added to the Lemon Ginger Shot to thin it out and make it go further. Pure ginger can be really intense, even for ginger lovers!)**

#### PREPARATION

- **Pour the juice of 5 lemons into a blender jug.**
- **Add 250 ml water, 2 tbps local honey and 100g fresh ginger.**
- **Blend until the ginger is as fine as possible.**
- **Place a nut milk bag (or muslin) over a jug, and empty the ginger mixture into it. Squeeze the bag to extract as much juice as possible.**
- **Use a funnel to pour the juice into a glass bottle.**
- **Store the Lemon Ginger Wellness Shot in the refrigerator for up to a week.**



## Complete Wellness Elixir

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### INGREDIENTS

35g of fresh ginger root.

125g spinach (instead of spinach you could also use kale, rocket, chicory).

1 medium fennel bulb (no fennel? try celery, courgette or cucumber instead).

2 green apples.

30g parsley.

25 drops Viridian organic lemon balm tincture.

### PREPARATION

- Juice all of the ingredients except for the lemon balm tincture.
- Add 25 drops of lemon balm tincture to the juice.

The Complete Wellness Elixir is an easy way of getting all your nutrients in, providing a powerhouse of essential vitamins that truly bolster immune function. Included is lemon balm tincture a botanical food supplement shown to support relaxation along with physical and mental wellbeing, proving itself particularly useful for the busy times in our lives.



## Three

### Foods rich in zinc

Zinc is a valuable mineral which increases white blood cell production, these cells fight infection and importantly zinc helps them fight more aggressively. Rich sources of zinc include:

- Poultry
- Game
- Lean red meat (grass-fed, organic where possible)
- Leeks
- Lentils
- Kidney beans
- Ginger root
- Pine nuts
- Pecan nuts
- Pumpkin seeds
- Sesame seeds

Remember, on average whole grains contain a whopping 15 times more zinc than their processed counterparts!

## Four

### Foods rich in beta-carotene

Beta-carotene is abundant in yellow, orange, red and green vegetables and fruits. It increases the number of infection-fighting cells and is a powerful antioxidant. Antioxidants mop up excess free radicals which can accelerate ageing. You can find beta-carotene in:

- Sweet potato
- Carrots
- Pepper
- Kale
- Winter squash
- Collard greens
- Broccoli
- Fresh thyme
- Spinach
- Turnip greens
- Mango
- Water melon



## Five

### Foods rich in selenium

Selenium is an essential trace mineral and adequate levels are important for effective immune functioning. Concentration in plants (and therefore the food chain) is determined by both the content and availability of selenium in the soil. Unfortunately, in the UK the content of the soil is generally low. Selenium can be found in:

- Brazil nuts
- Beef
- Molasses
- Oily fish
- Brown rice
- Sunflower seeds
- Oats
- Turnips
- Asparagus
- Oysters
- Chicken
- Wheat germ
- Egg

## Six

### Healthy fats

In addition, omega-3 fatty acids help regulate inflammation and are likely deficient in a western diet. Increasing these fatty acids can help us move away from a hyper inflammatory response to infection. High amounts of omega-3 fats can be obtained from oily fish and marine algae (spirulina and chlorella which you can add to a smoothie), along with several high-fat plant foods (chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, flax seeds (the richest source), hemp seeds and walnuts). An easy to remember acronym of omega-3 containing fish is SMASH which stands for salmon, mackerel, anchovie, sardine and herring. To achieve intake, consume 2-3 portions of oily fish a week or from an algal source.

## Seven

### Garlic

Garlic helps kill bacteria and viruses. It is a power antioxidant and immune stimulant that stimulates multiple increases of infection-fighting white cells and efficiency of antibody production. Add lots to your cooking so you can really enjoy the benefits particularly over the colder months.

## Eight

### Warming spices

Warming spices such as cayenne, turmeric and cinnamon can be included in cooking and keep our enzymes functioning optimally by promoting optimal body temperature.

## Nine

### Elderberry syrup

Elderberries have immune boosting compounds such as antioxidants, vitamins and flavonoids. Elderberries act as an antiviral by preventing viral cell entry and strengthening immune response against cold and flu viruses, speeding recovery. Elderberry helps to treat the flu virus and may reduce the duration of the common cold. During September and October these deep dark, black-red berries can be found growing, in umbels, wild throughout the UK. Remember, it's important to cook elderberries, but they can be delicious added to jellies, syrups, sauces and stewed fruit. They taste a bit like blackcurrant cordial and will mix well in a smoothie. Alternatively they can easily be bought in syrup from your local health food shop. Take 1-2 teaspoons daily as a healthy tonic to ward off viruses and boost your immune system or 1-2 teaspoons up to 4 times a day at the first sign of a cold coming on.

## Ten

### Honey

Honey is one of nature's gifts and has unique medicinal and nutritional properties. It has phytochemical, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and antioxidant properties. Furthermore, honey includes many compounds, such as proteins, vitamins, amino acids, minerals, and organic acids. The use of honey is highly beneficial in the treatment of an irritating cough. It is soothing and thus produces a soothing effect on the inflamed mucus membrane of the upper respiratory tract.

## Eleven

### Hydration

Ensure good intake of quality filtered water (aiming for 2L spread throughout the day, you can include herbal teas in this amount). Water regulates body temperature, transports nutrients, removes wastes, nourishes joints and cartilage and provides fluid to support digestion. But for the immune system optimal hydration is important as it helps support communication and biochemical pathways. Your blood stream is relied upon by your immune system as it transports



# Easy Elderberry Syrup

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## INGREDIENTS

4 cups fresh elderberries or 2 cups dried elderberries, stems and any green berries removed.

6 cups filtered water or more to cover berries.

1 cup organic sugar, more to taste.

## FLAVOURINGS TO CUSTOMISE

I used cinnamon stick, star anise, cloves and cardamom pods for a spicy flavour though here are some other options:

1-2 cinnamon sticks.

1-2 whole vanilla beans, split down the middle.

Zest of lemon or lime.

1/4 cup lemon or lime juice.

8-10 cloves.

10-15 cardamom pods.

3-4 pieces of star anise.

2-4 inches of fresh ginger or turmeric root, sliced.

2 tbsp of fresh herbs such as bay leaf, olive leaf, thyme, sage, or rosemary etc.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Combine fresh or dried elderberries in a large pot and cover with water.
- Bring to a boil, and stir; reduce to a medium-low simmer for 30 minutes without a lid, stirring occasionally.
- Allow to cool. Use a potato masher, mash berries into the bottom of the pot to extract their juices.
- Strain this through a fine mesh sieve or cheesecloth, it does stain so be careful.
- Add the juice back to the pot, along with sugar and spices of choice.
- Boil again to reduce and concentrate the mixture. I did this for a further 30 minutes on a medium simmer.
- Sieve out the spices and divide into small sterilised jars whilst it's still warm as this will seal the jars for long storage, fill them right to the top before placing the lids. If using jars with metal lids they should pop in and be sealed once the syrup is cool. Sealed jars can be stored long-term for several years.
- Alternatively, you can refrigerate open jars for 2-3 months if stored correctly, or freeze the syrup for up to 6 months by pouring into ice cube trays for easy dosing.





fluid, nutrients and vital communication signals to your organs.

## Twelve Green tea

Jam-packed full of antioxidants, green tea will help keep the immune system in tip-top condition. Why not try swapping your normal tea or coffee for green tea, there are many different varieties available to suit all palates. Twinings and Clipper are great brands to try as their teabags are sealed with non-GM bio-material made from plant cellulose, known as PLA. They are completely free of polypropylene – the oil-based plastic that can be damaging to our health. Green tea does contain naturally occurring caffeine just like black,

white and Oolong tea. The levels of caffeine in green tea are slightly lower than you'd expect to find in black tea, and considerably less than in a cup of coffee.

## Thirteen

### Eating for the colder seasons

Now is the time to shift away from raw foods and light salads which are brilliant for the heat of the summer, but are energetically cold. Avoid too drinks served frozen or iced. Instead fill your plate with all the delicious seasonal vegetables that are available, adding warm hearty foods like roasted root vegetables, squash and warming soups which will help keep you nourished. Include plant proteins such as beans and lentils, nuts and seeds, and animal proteins but be mindful dairy



can contribute to congestion. Chicken soup or broth is one of the best immune boosting foods there is to prevent snuffles and sneezes, or if an illness suddenly arrives it really helps to send it packing faster! If you've had a chicken dinner why not use the carcass to make stock or broth, you can keep it in the fridge for a week or pop in soup bags into the freezer. A folk preparation powered with pungent, warming ingredients and revered for its immune supporting properties is Fire Cider, see page 14.

**TIP:** If you feel the cold or have a 'cold constitution' and just can't get warm try eating mainly foods and drinks served warm. Choose also cooking methods such as steamed, slow cooked, baked and roasted. Soup, tea, a cozy blanket, snuggling in on a rainy day, being fireside all have the qualities of warmth to them. If you think how it feels to embrace a warm cup of tea on a cold winter morning, there is no denying the innate connection between physical warmth and emotional warmth. Fill a thermos with a hearty, warm soup. An extra thermos for warm herbal teas or lemon and honey is a great addition to your day too. Lighting a candle at a mealtime is special and warm, nourishing not only the physical body but your emotional and soul life. I understand when you're busy and feeling rushed it's easy to just do the basics but the little acts of self care really help bolster our immune system.

## Easy Chicken Broth

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### INGREDIENTS

1 organic chicken carcass	1 sprig of parsley
2 carrots, chopped into 3 pieces	1 sprig of thyme
1 stick celery, halved	8 peppercorns
1 onion halved, retaining the skin	1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar
2 bay leaves	2 litres of filtered water

### PREPARATION

Cook the carcass for 20-30 minutes in an oven proof dish to brown the bones. On the hob, add all of the ingredients to a large saucepan with a lid over a high heat. Once the liquid has been brought to the boil, reduce the heat to a slow simmer. Simmer for at least 6 hours skimming scum from the top of the liquid as it cooks. Leave to cool and strain the liquid through a sieve, discarding the carcass and vegetables.

Store in glass jars in the fridge if using that week.

## Fire Cider

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Fire Cider is a popular herbal folk preparation powered with pungent, warming ingredients and is revered for its immune supporting properties. It also stimulates digestion and raises your internal thermometer on cold days. By leaving the ingredients to steep for two weeks, the essential oils and medicinal properties are extracted by the apple cider vinegar. It really is the ultimate colds and flu remedy! Once prepared take a teaspoon a day, you can also add it to your cooking for a punch of flavour and wellness.

### INGREDIENTS

Roughly equal quantities by volume layered into a kilner jar (fill to just under the full mark) of the following ingredients:

- Garlic, chopped/crushed.
- Onion, chopped. Just take the outer skin off.
- Chilli, chopped. They don't have to be super fine.
- Ginger, grated. Chop up what you're unable to grate and use too.
- Fresh horseradish, grated. Be prepared for a powerful sinus-opening experience, it is also quite woody.
- Organic Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV).

### PREPARATION

- Layer ingredients into a kilner jar and fill with ACV (to the full mark and covering the ingredients).
- Seal it up and give it a shake.
- Give it a quick shake once a day for 2 weeks.
- Some people like to strain the pulp through cheesecloth and into a clean jar but it really is preference.
- You can keep it in a dark cupboard/pantry or refrigerate.



## Your next steps

Congratulations! You've taken significant steps to prioritise YOU over the colder months with the guidance contained within this eBook, 'Your Winter Medicine Cabinet'. Thank you for joining me on a journey towards optimal health and a strengthened immune system, I assure you it will bolster you in your every day and help you to live vibrantly. It's amazing how different you can feel when these ideas are put into action.

### Let's talk about the next steps:

**Stay connected:** keep in touch with me and a community of like-minded individuals. Share your success, challenges and insights. I'm here to support you.

**Seek more guidance:** if you've found the guidance in 'Your Winter Medicine Cabinet' helpful but need health support that is more personalised, I'm here for you. Consider scheduling a **FREE** discovery call with me to discuss your health needs and how I can help you with tailored guidance.



### Contact me

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