

SUMMARY *“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food” (Hippocrates)*. We started the bulletin with the Hippocrates’ sentence, who is known as the father of medicine, to draw attention to the foods that not only protect us from illnesses, but also heal us from illnesses. With the arrival of autumn, the weather gets cold and upper respiratory tract infections spread around. We are going to address upper respiratory tract infections in this issue of the bulletin.

The Symptoms of Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)

URTI is a term that refers to the infections which are located in the mouth, nose, trachea, pharynx and tonsil and are usually kind of virus-induced . Influenza, cold, sinusitis etc are kind of URTI infections. The symptoms are fever, headache, weakness, joint pain, muscle pain, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, cough, sneeze etc.

Why is URTI so common?

URTI is so common because the illness spreads through droplets. When the infected people sneeze or cough, the viruses spread through the air and infect the people that inhale the infectious air. Especially in crowded areas, the illness spreads quickly and the number of patients increases.

Protection from URTI

Because URTI is a group of illnesses that spread through droplets and uses respiratory tract to spread around, it is difficult to protect ourselves from it. As the illness is caused by viruses, antibiotics are not effective for the infections. Because the antibiotics are not effective or it is almost impossible to prevent spreading viruses, the body’s immune systems are needed to be strengthened for better protection. Basic protection methods are having healthy and balanced diet, breathing clean air and oxygen, adequate exposure to sunlight and not smoking or using harmful or addictive substances.

The medications that are prescribed for URTI are symptomatic medicines which are not a cure for the illness but relieve the patient’s pain or fatigue. Sometimes doctors prescribe antibiotics, but if the illness’ agents are viruses, antibiotics are not going to be effective.

Things to do on URTI

It might be impossible to avoid URTI when you are in a crowded area or there are a lot of ill people around you; but there are things you can do, to heal in a short time, to reduce illness symptoms, and prevent the infection spreading through lungs and the lower respiratory tract and causing bronchitis or pneumonia. Things to do are:



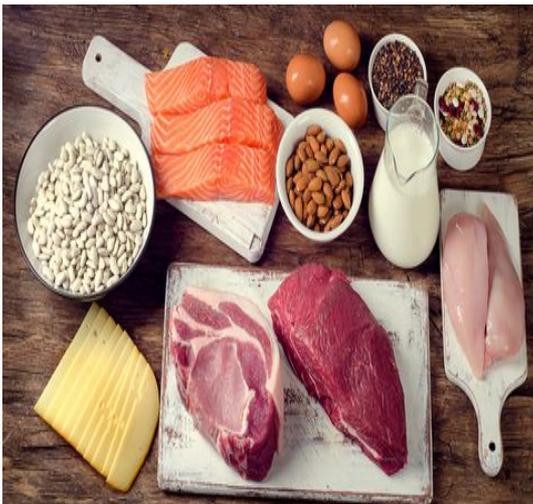
Consume plenty of water. Like the way we clean everything with water the body needs water to clean itself from metabolism residues and micro organisms. At the same time, water softens the throat; makes it easy to cough, and reduces sore throat and the pain in the throat when you cough. Also water has expectorant effect that dilutes the sputum, and makes it easy to get out.



Consume plenty of vitamin C. Vitamin C has a function on protein metabolism which is necessary for body cells repair. For an illness like IRTU that causes cell damage, vitamin C is a basic medicine. One of the best vitamin C resources is lemon. I usually advise the patients who come to the health unit to have one lemon a day.



Although there has been no research about it but, I have directly witnessed the healing effects of lemon on my patients. The lemon juice shows its effect as soon as it runs through throat, the larynx and the pharynx of the patients who have a sore throat, throat pain, itchy throat, cough and sneeze. At the same time, vitamin C helps the immune system cells to increase, and results in rapid recovery. If you are going to use lemon for URTI, it is better to squeeze one lemon and drink the juice without diluting it. You can put some salt or sugar in it, if it is too sour to drink. I usually advise my patients to drink a glass of water after they drink lemon juice.



Intake high-protein content food. Infections damage the body cells. The basic element of the body cell is protein. So taking high protein helps to repair damaged cells, and accelerates recovery. The best high-protein resources are meat, milk, eggs, fish, cheese, legumes etc.

- If there is any runny nose or nose congestion, **washing nostrils** cleans the infections mechanical, and restricts the infections spreading through lungs. At the same time washing nostrils provides you comfort when you breath, and enough oxygen to the body.
- **Taking lukewarm shower** before sleep allows you wake up vigorous in the morning. But if you have a fever you should avoid it. Taking lukewarm shower opens the pores and oxygenate the body and helps to remove lactic acid from the muscles and joints. That makes you feel better. At the same time lukewarm shower relaxes the muscles and reduces muscle and joint pain. But as soon as you take a shower you should go to bed. Because after the shower skin pores are open and if you stay outside of the bed you get cold into the body, the pores close suddenly. That makes you feel worse and the illness worsens. I suggest to my patients that they get lukewarm shower before they sleep and they get into bed as soon as they get out of the shower.
- **Do not exercise and have bed rest at least 3 days.**

REFERENCES

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NOTE: Special thanks to English teacher Mahdis Rostamzade for her support on this issue.