

# FROM ANTIBIOTICS TO KNEE PAIN

Dr. Aieta,

I am a 36-year-old man who has been suffering from repeated chest and sinus infections for years. It seems like I am always on antibiotics and it has gotten to the point where they don't even help anymore. The winter seems to be the worst time for me. If someone just sneezes near me, I end up sick. Is there anything I can do to help boost up my immune system so I'm not always getting sick?

Thanks,  
Edward

Edward,

I think antibiotics are over-prescribed by most doctors. Most colds are due to a viral infection and not a bacterial infection, so many times antibiotics are not necessary. When a person takes antibiotics for every cold, it actually makes their immune system lazy because the body is now relying on the antibiotics to defend itself. Excessive antibiotic use also causes the bacteria to become resistant, so that over time the person needs to take stronger antibiotics.

In addition, antibiotics not only kill bad bacteria in a person's system but also the beneficial bacteria called acidophilus. This acidophilus plays a huge role in maintaining health. When this normal flora gets wiped out, it allows room for bad bacteria to grow. This is part of the reason people get chronic infections, then they take more antibiotics and a vicious cycle starts.

Part of my treatment protocol for patients who have been on a lot of antibiotics and have repeated infections is to put them on some acidophilus bacteria in a pill form to replenish what was killed off. I also tell patients that have repeated infections to eliminate sugar from their diet, which can slow immune function and feed bacteria and viruses. Stress and inadequate sleep can also contribute to a weak immune system.

The immune system also needs adequate nutrients to function optimally, specifically adequate protein intake and vitamins and minerals like vitamins A, C, E, B6, zinc

and selenium. I routinely prescribe immune-boosting herbs such as Echinacea, Astragalus, and Goldenseal. Specifically, Goldenseal has antibacterial properties and can act as a natural antibiotic without the harmful side effects. For patients with chronic sinus infections, I encourage a nasal rinse with saline solution and essential oils to wipe out any harmful viruses or bacteria that may be starting to reside there. Along with the saline rinse, I also recommend a nasal wash that contains a natural sugar molecule called xylitol. When used on a regular basis, this can greatly reduce the number of upper respiratory infections because the viruses and bacteria will attach to this xylitol molecule, rather than the sinus tissue.

Finally, for any patient prone to chronic infections, I will always rule out any underlying thyroid or adrenal dysfunction as a contributing factor through routine blood work.

Dr. Aieta,

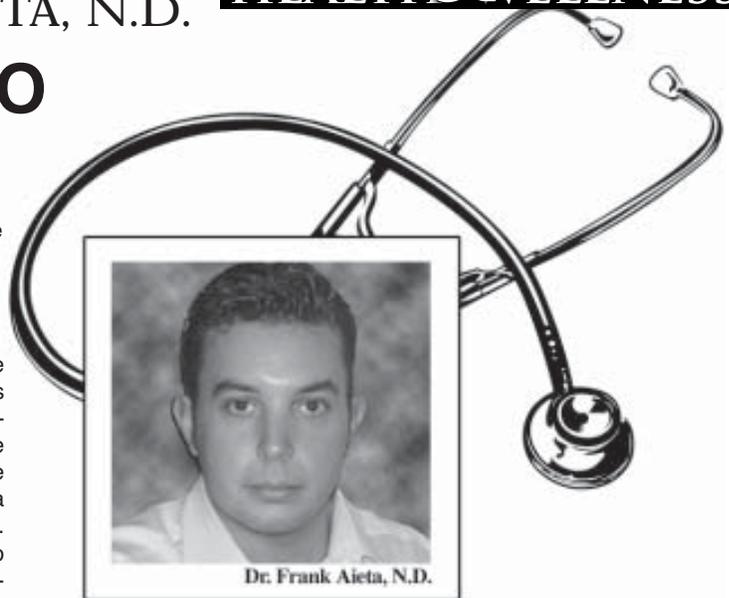
I'm writing in reference to my 12-year-old son. He has been experiencing a lot of knee pain lately. He is very active in sports and (the pain) is really limiting him. His doctor told us that the pain was due to a condition called Osgood-Schlatter's disease, and says that it is very common in children as they grow. The doctor suggested that (my son) refrain from sports for a while and to take an anti-inflammatory drug to help with the pain and inflammation.

Is there anything natural that can be done to treat this condition? My son really enjoys sports and doesn't want to stop, and we heard that it could take a few months, or up to a year, for this condition to resolve.

Thank you,  
Robert

Robert,

Osgood-Schlatter is a very common condition in young children and adolescents who are still growing, and your son is the age when it is most common. Sports that require a lot of running and jumping are



Dr. Frank Aieta, N.D.

particularly associated with Osgood-Schlatter. The symptoms usually include tenderness, swelling, and pain just below one knee that usually becomes worse with activity. It is correct that this disease can last for months, and in some cases years, before subsiding. Children may become discouraged and won't want to play sports because the pain is so severe at times when running.

The traditional medical treatment for this condition is just as you stated: limiting activity and the use of anti-inflammatory medications. Doctors may also recommend applying ice to help relieve the inflammation to the knee when the pain first appears, but this is only a temporary fix. In severe cases surgery may also be recommended.

My initial treatment for this condition was a natural herbal anti-inflammatory called bromelain, but it only worked slightly and temporarily. I later learned of a treatment from a colleague, Dr. Wright, who claimed a 100 percent remission rate of Osgood-Schlatter disease

with the use of vitamin E and selenium for four to six weeks. I used this treatment with about six of my young patients suffering from this condition, and every one of them got better and the problem never returned.

The exact dosage and duration can vary depending upon the age and size of the child, so a doctor trained in nutritional medicine like a naturopathic physician should be consulted to oversee the treatment. This is a far better treatment choice than using anti-inflammatory drugs for months on end. Not to mention, this method actually cures the problem, as opposed to simply fixing it temporarily.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. He specializes in the treatment of disease utilizing natural therapies. If you have any health questions, please send them to [DrAieta@aol.com](mailto:DrAieta@aol.com). Dr. Aieta may be able to answer some of them in an upcoming issue.

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