



Holiday Essentials

Wellness tips, top ingredients,
protocols, and more.

Throughout the year, self-care is a popular topic of conversation between integrative practitioners and their patients. As we approach the holiday season and the New Year, the discussion around self-care becomes even more important.

We've put together this **Holiday Essentials Guide** with seasonal wellness tips, top supplements, and protocols to help you and your patients take on the holiday season!

Expert advice: 3 tips to help your patients avoid the December health slump

1. Talk to your patients about healthy eating habits over the holidays

Empower your patients with resources on mindful eating and tips to avoid overeating. Rather than avoiding unhealthy foods entirely, eating a nutritious snack before going to holiday events, being mindful of portion sizes, and drinking water regularly can help prevent overindulgence.

If your patients have concerns about weight, consider recommending an alternating diet schedule. Alternating diet schedules allow your patients some flexibility in food choices while continuing to support their long-term weight loss goals.

2. Give your patients tips and methods to effectively manage their stress and promote sleep

Increased stress and poor sleep are two common health concerns for patients during the holiday season. Proactive stress management and prevention is essential. Remind your patients that it's okay to decline invitations and take time to recharge. Maintaining a regular exercise routine can also help manage stress and offset other less-than-healthy holiday habits. Talk to your patients about the importance of a good night's sleep and provide tips to improve sleep hygiene.

Further in this document, we've included ingredients and protocols for sleep and stress to help guide your recommendations.

3. Remind patients to use their FSAs and HSAs before they expire

Send your patients regular emails leading up to the end of December to remind them to use up their Health Savings Accounts (HSA) and Flex Spending Accounts (FSA). Most HSA and FSA plans cover supplements purchased on Fullscript, so patients can purchase products to support their health throughout the holidays, or stock up on their regular products for the new year.

Top ingredients for the holiday season

We've outlined some of Fullscript's top recommended ingredients to help your patients stay healthy throughout the holiday season.

Sleep & stress

Between chaotic holiday crowds, the increasing number of commitments, and the impending family visits, it's common for patients to feel overwhelmed during the holidays. Supplementing with L-theanine, melatonin, and adaptogens could help them mitigate stress and get a better night's sleep.

L-theanine

L-theanine is an amino acid found primarily in green tea leaves. Research has demonstrated that L-theanine supplementation may help improve mood and promote relaxation and sleep.²⁰



Melatonin

Melatonin is a neurotransmitter-like compound produced by the pineal gland in response to darkness. Research has shown that melatonin improves sleep quality, increases total sleep time, and decreases sleep onset latency.³¹

Adaptogens

The word "adaptogen" is derived from the Greek word "adapto", meaning "to adjust". Adaptogens are defined as biologically active, medicinal plant substances that help your body adapt or adjust to stress. Examples of adaptogens include ashwagandha, rhodiola, Siberian ginseng, Asian ginseng, and schisandra.^{42 53}



Digestive health

During the holiday season, most people are guilty of a little indulgence. Unfortunately, for many of our patients, indulging in certain foods can cause digestive discomfort and indigestion.

Deglycyrrhizinated licorice (DGL)

DGL may help soothe indigestion due to its anti-inflammatory and mucous-generating effects. This form of licorice extract contains no glycyrrhizin, making it a safe choice for patients concerned about hypertension.¹¹



Digestive enzymes

Supplemental digestive enzymes can help break down macronutrients to their absorbable forms, giving the digestive system a little extra help to get through those large holiday meals and decadent foods.²¹

Fiber

Both soluble and insoluble fiber play an integral role in maintaining gastrointestinal health, supporting digestion and regular elimination. Fiber provides bulk to stools, binds to toxins for excretion, and supports gut barrier function.²⁵



Liver health

The liver is involved in hundreds of body functions, including detoxification, hormone balancing, and fat metabolism. B vitamins, milk thistle, and curcumin can support the liver and help your patients recover from the holidays.

B vitamins

B vitamins are essential to the activation of liver enzymes and the proper functioning of liver detoxification pathways.³⁸



Milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*)

Milk thistle, a plant originating from Europe, has long been used for its hepatoprotective effects. Its ability to prevent damage to the liver is thought to be primarily due to the antioxidant and free radical scavenging effects of its active constituents, silymarin and silybin.⁵¹

Curcumin

Curcumin, the primary active constituent of turmeric, is well-known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. Research has shown that curcumin is effective in preventing and treating various liver disorders associated with oxidative stress.¹⁰



Immune health

Stress, loss of sleep, and indulging in certain foods, such as rich meals and sugary treats, can increase the risk of illness over the holidays. The good news is that supplementing with probiotics, elderberry, and vitamin C may help your patients feel better faster.

Probiotics

Probiotics help modulate the immune response by influencing the actions of dendritic cells, macrophages, and T and B lymphocytes. Research has shown that probiotics may help prevent or decrease the duration and severity of upper respiratory tract infections, such as the common cold.^{47 54}



Elderberry

Clinical research shows that some elderberry extracts may improve flu-like symptoms and reduce the duration of colds due to its high concentration of flavonoids and other beneficial vitamins, minerals, phytosterols, and carotenoids. Often found in syrup form, elderberry is a great choice for both adults and children.⁵⁶

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is an essential, water-soluble vitamin, well-known for its antioxidant properties and ability to reduce free radicals. Vitamin C supplementation has been shown to improve immune function and reduce the duration and severity of the common cold.^{16 30 41}



Integrative protocols

Fullscript protocols are designed to make it easy for practitioners to confidently create individualized treatment plans for their patients, improving both clinical efficiency and efficacy. Used as a starting point when developing integrative treatment plans, protocols may be adjusted to take into account individual differences, such as patient allergies, diet, and lifestyle.

Below, you'll find our top protocols for common seasonal health concerns: Cold and Flu Support, Adrenal Support, and Sleep Support.

Cold and flu support

Vitamin C

1 g, once per day in adults and minimum 200 mg, once per day in children as an ongoing maintenance dose ^{16 41}

3 to 4 g, once per day at the onset of the common cold symptoms for the cold's duration in adults
1 to 2 g, once per day may be provided to children during a cold ^{16 41}

Research findings:

- Reduces the duration of the common cold by approximately a half-day, or by 8% in adults and by 14-18% in children ^{16 41}
- Reduces time of confinement by approximately six hours and fever duration by approximately a half-day, relieves chest pain and chills by approximately eight hours ⁴¹
- Improves antimicrobial and natural killer (NK) cell activities, lymphocyte levels, chemotaxis, delayed T cell responses, sympathetic nervous response, and induces anti-reactive oxygen species activity ⁴¹

Panax quinquefolius

400mg, once per day, minimum 8-16 weeks in healthy adults as a preventative measure ^{32 40 46}

Research findings:

- Reduces the duration of colds or acute respiratory infections by approximately 5-6 days ^{32 46}
- Reduces the incidence of colds by 25%, ⁴⁰ the incidence of influenza and respiratory syncytial virus, and the relative risk of respiratory symptoms by 48% ³²
- Reduces total symptom severity score for sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, nasal congestion, malaise, fever, headache, hoarseness, earaches, and cough ⁴⁰

Echinacea purpurea

Prevention: 0.9 ml, three times per day (equivalent to 2400 mg of extract), minimum 4 months
Acute: Up to 4.5 ml liquid extract (equivalent to 4000 mg), once per day at the first stage of cold development ²²

Research findings:

- Reduces the relative risk of cold development by 10-58% ^{24 44}
- Reduces days with symptoms by 26% (1.4 days), ²² and symptom scores by 23% ¹³
- 52% fewer patients requiring concomitant use of aspirin, paracetamol, or ibuprofen ²²
- Reduces the incidence of cumulative viral infections by 26% and recurring infections by 59%, including influenza virus and parainfluenza virus ²²
- Increases associated counts for white blood cells, monocytes, neutrophils, and natural killer cells, and suppresses superoxide production in the later-phase of the cold by neutrophils ¹⁴

Zinc

75-100 mg of elemental zinc as zinc acetate or zinc gluconate lozenges, once per day, within 24 hours of the onset of common cold symptoms, minimum 1 to 2 weeks cold ^{15 17 18 19 49}

Research findings:

- Reduces cold duration by 33%, or by approximately 1.65 to 3 days in healthy adults cold ^{15 18 19 39 45 49}
- Zinc acetate equivalently reduces the duration by 40% and zinc gluconate reduces the duration by 28%, ¹⁵ while other sources indicate greater efficacy with zinc acetate in healthy adults ⁴⁵
- Reduces the incidence of cold symptoms after 5-7 days in healthy adults and children ^{18 49}
- Reduces the duration of muscle soreness by 54%, cough by 46%, voice hoarseness by 43%, nasal congestion by 37%, nasal discharge by 34%, scratchy throat by 33%, sneezing by 22%, and sore throat by 18% in healthy adults ^{17 39}
- Reduces the incidence of common cold development, absence from school, and antibiotic use in children ⁴⁹
- Improves anti-inflammatory and antioxidant profile via reductions in plasma interleukin-1 receptor antagonist (IL-1ra), intercellular adhesion molecule-1 (ICAM-1), TNF- α , MDA, HAE, and 8-oHdG, and increases in IL-2 mRNA in mononuclear cells in healthy adults ³⁹

Probiotics

Probiotics may reduce the incidence of colds with minor effects on prevention, as well as improve influenza vaccination efficacy for A/H1N1, A/H3N2, and B strains, but is dependent on strain and population. ^{23 28 55}

Pediatric:

Common cold: 5 billion CFU of Lactobacillus acidophilus NCFM (ATCC 700396), twice per day, minimum 6 months

Research findings:

- Reduces the incidence of fever by 53%, cough by 41%, and antibiotic use by 68%
- Reduces the duration of fever, coughing, and rhinorrhea by 32%
- Reduces days absent from childcare by 32% ²⁹

Influenza: 10 billion CFU of Bifidobacterium animalis subs. lactis Bi-07 (ATCC PTA-4802) and Lactobacillus acidophilus NCFM (ATCC 700396), twice per day for 6 months

Research findings:

- Reduces the incidence of fever by 73%, rhinorrhea by 73%, cough by 62%, and antibiotic use by 84%
- Reduces the duration of fever, coughing, and rhinorrhea by 48%
- Reduces days absent from childcare by 28% ²⁹

Adult:

Common cold: 1 billion CFU of Lactobacillus paracasei 8700:2 (DSM 13434) & Lactobacillus plantarum HEAL 9 (DSM 15312), once per day for 3 months

Research findings:

- Reduces the incidence of developing more than one common cold episode and number of days with a cold
- Reduces total symptom scores & pharyngeal symptoms of cold
- Reduces B lymphocyte proliferation ⁴

Adult:

Influenza: 10 billion CFU of Lactobacillus fermentum CECT5716, once per day for 2 weeks before influenza vaccination and two weeks after

Research findings:

- Reduces the incidence of influenza 5-months after vaccination compared to vaccine alone
- Increases natural killer cells, T-helper response, and IgA levels ³⁶

Influenza: 10 billion CFU of Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG, twice per day for 4 weeks after influenza vaccination ⁹

Research findings:

- Increases seroprotection for the H3N2 strain during the supplementation period

Influenza: 500 mg of Saccharomyces cerevisiae (EpiCor®), once per day for 12 weeks ^{33 34}

Research findings:

- Reduces the incidence of cold/flu symptoms with or without prior vaccination
- Reduces the duration of symptoms with prior vaccination

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Adrenal support

Withania somnifera

300mg, total per day, minimum of 8 weeks ^{5 7}

Research findings:

- Serum cortisol, body weight, and body mass index, Perceived Stress Scale and Food Cravings Questionnaire, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire were all improved ^{5 7}
- Ashwagandha safely improved resistance to stress in individuals ⁵

Rhodiola rosea

576mg, total per day, minimum of 28 days ³⁷

Research findings:

- Rhodiola increases mental performance including the capacity to concentrate and decreased cortisol response to awakening stress ³⁷
- Improvement in general fatigue including aspects like physical and mental fatigue, neuro-motoric tests and overall well being was shown to be significantly improved ^{8 48}

Panax ginseng

960-2000mg, total per day, minimum of 4 weeks ^{12 26}

Research findings:

- Numerical rating scale (NRS) score, a self-assessment of fatigue severity, was improved ²⁶
- Panax has shown to reduce circulating cortisol while increasing enzymatic and nonspecific antioxidant activity in response to physical stress ¹²
- Dosing of 2000 mg per day improved the visual analogue scale (VAS) results ²⁶
- Reactive oxygen species (ROS) and malondialdehyde (MDA) levels were lowered and a dosing of 1000 mg increased GSH concentration and activity ²⁶

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Sleep support

Melatonin

2.5 to 3mg, total per day, minimum three weeks ^{6 43}

Research findings:

- Increase in sleep quality was observed without adverse effects ^{6 43}
- During the withdrawal period of melatonin, carryover of the effect on sleep latency time was observed on the following night ⁴³
- Improvement in sleep onset latency, sleep-wake patterns, and delayed sleep phase syndrome ²
- The lowest dosing of exogenous melatonin is recommended in order to mimic the natural physiological circadian rhythm of melatonin ⁵²

Magnesium

320mg, total per day of magnesium citrate, minimum of 7 weeks ³⁵

Research findings:

- Improvement of PSQI score, which includes improvements in sleep quality, sleep onset latency, sleep duration, sleep disturbance, daytime dysfunction, and hypnotic drug scores ³⁵
- In addition to improving PSQI score, magnesium reduced early morning awakenings ¹

Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*)

1060mg, total per day, minimum 4 weeks ⁵⁰

Research findings:

- Improvement in sleep quality and overall effectiveness observed in clinical insomnia ^{3 50}
- Reduction in sleep latency was observed in a concentrated extract of a 5.3:1 ratio ²⁷

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Disclaimer

The ingredients included in these protocols are based on a review of existing clinical research, with a priority placed on systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

These protocols are intended to form a foundation for developing individualized treatment plans. Clinician discretion is highly advised, as ingredients can vary in safety and effectiveness, depending on the needs of the individual patient.

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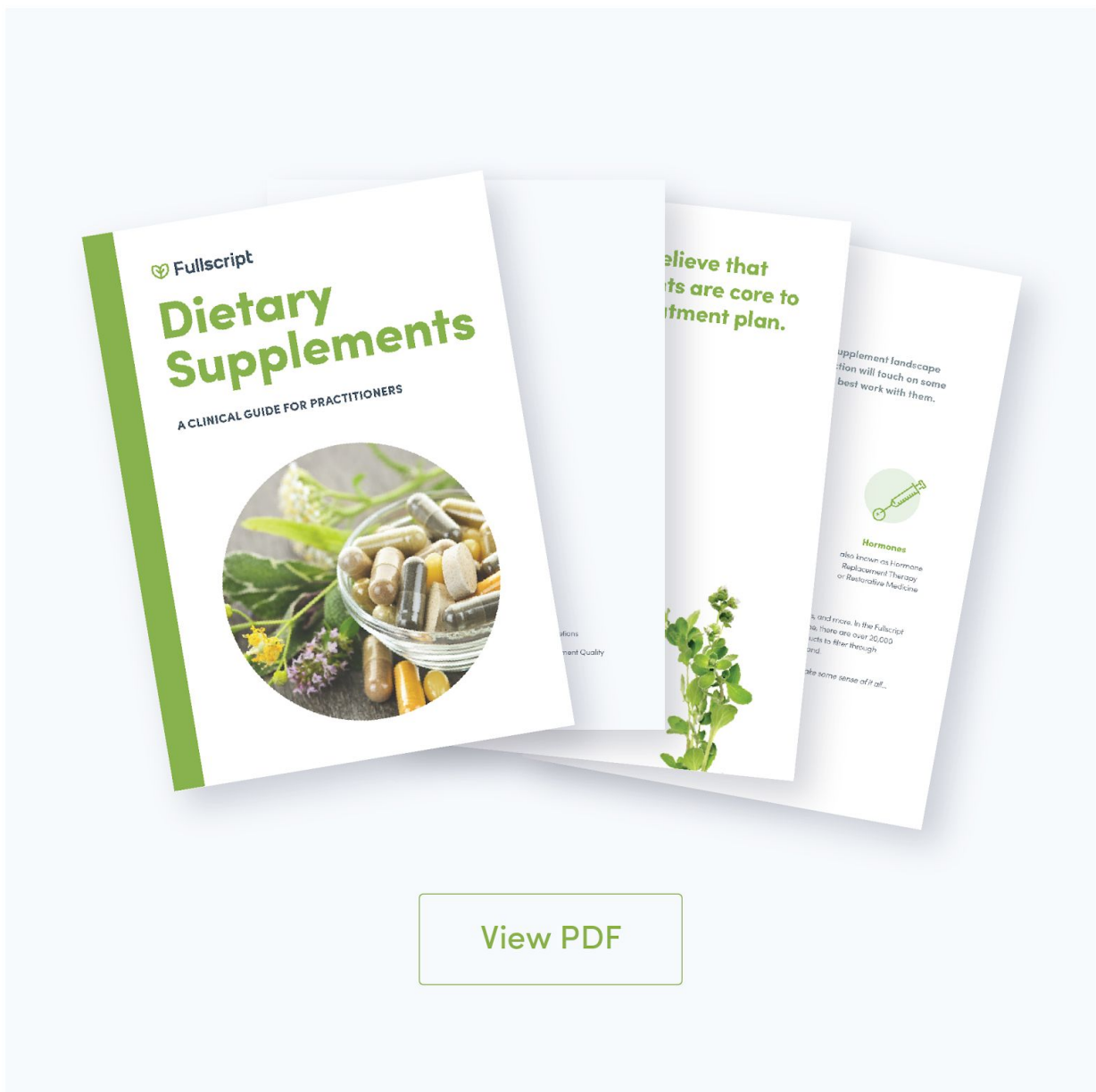
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