

May 2020

IMMUNE SUPPORT PROTOCOLS TO SUPPORT A RETURN TO SCHOOL

Background

Multiple sources of evidence suggest that there is no justification for ongoing school closures during the tail of the present Covid-19 pandemic wave. This includes a detailed summary of evidence on the transmission potential and susceptibility of children and other groups to severe disease undertaken by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health,¹ and a major review of the effects of school closures on Covid-19 disease risk and mortality which concluded the evidence of benefit was at best marginal and only when school closures coincided with the peak of infection.² Additionally there are genuine concerns that long-term social distancing if applied to reopened schools could lead to significant psychological and emotional harm and damage to children.³

UK government guidance for protective measures in education and childcare settings currently proposes a 5 level hierarchy in which efforts are made to minimise contact and mixing “as much as possible....by altering....the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times).”⁴ Based on the lack of evidence of benefit of such social distancing and the risk of harms, the Alliance for natural Health (ANH) International and the British Society for Ecological Medicine support the reopening of schools with resumption of normal mixing. However, we advocate a number of additional precautions be taken to minimise risks to staff and children, as well as to guard against any risk of uncontrolled community infection. These include:

- a) Staff training to help identify Covid-19 symptoms and initiate test, track and trace programme
- b) Shielding of vulnerable adults and children to minimise SARS-CoV-2 infection risk
- c) Provision of guidance for immune support for children, the families of children returning to school and staff.

The present briefing document provides guidance for immune support for both children and adults. It has been developed jointly by the [Alliance for Natural Health](#) (ANH) International and the [British Society for Ecological Medicine](#). Further details about these two independent non-profit organisations are given on their respective websites.

The ANH proposed on 21 May⁵ an 11-step strategy for school reopening which is summarised in a 2-page flyer.⁶ The ANH is fully in support of the proportionate approach to school reopening as proposed by the Us For Them campaign⁷ which attempts to balance the risks and benefits of different options while supporting social justice and equity among children.

The present guidance should be considered in the context of the latest UK government guidance for parents and carers in relation to the reopening of schools.⁸

¹ [RCPCCH Covid-19 research evidence summary](#), May 2020.

² [Lancet Child Adolesc Health. 2020; 4\(5\): 397-404.](#)

³ [Lancet Child Adolesc Health. 2020; 4\(6\):421.](#)

⁴ Department of Education guidance: [Guidance -Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#), 12 May 2020.

⁵ ANH website article and video: [‘Should schools reopen?’](#), 21 May 2020.

⁶ ANH flyer: [11-step strategy for school reopening](#), 21 May 2020.

⁷ Us For Them website: <https://www.usforthem.co.uk/>.

⁸ Department of Education [Guidance - What parents and carers need to know about schools, colleges and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak](#), 12 May 2020..

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NUTRITIONAL IMMUNE SUPPORT GUIDANCE

The key elements of any immune support approach should involve three main considerations:

1. Maintaining a healthy internal environment of the body – including appropriate nutrition and adequate hydration
2. Maintaining a healthy external environment – including minimising unnecessary negative stress, healthy social environments and minimising exposure to environmental chemicals
3. Engaging in healthy behaviours –including adequate and regular [outdoor physical activity](#) and adequate sleep quality and quantity

The present guidance concerns itself primarily with nutritional support. The ANH provides guidance on healthy eating both for children and adults, in its Food4Kids⁹ and Food4Health¹⁰ guides, respectively. There is an adapted version of the adult guide for vegans.¹¹ This guidance seeks to maintain healthy weight, metabolic and immune function by ensuring reduced intakes of common food allergens, the consumption of diverse, nutrient-dense diets with a minimum of added sugars and highly processed foods, enhancing metabolic flexibility and minimising addiction to processed foods.¹²

Given the importance of specific micronutrients in maintaining innate immunity and widespread sub-optimal levels of key micronutrients as demonstrated through the rolling UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey,¹³ daily supplemental intakes of three micronutrients is strongly recommended to enhance prevention for children and adults in schools and other educational settings where social distancing is not practiced or may be difficult to enforce.

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Micronutrient	Daily dosage of food supplements			
	Children (4-6 years)	Children (7-10 years)	Children (10-17 years)	Adults (18 years and over)
Vitamin D	20-25 micrograms (800-1000 IU)	25 micrograms (1000 IU)	50 micrograms (2000 IU)	100 micrograms (4000 IU)
Vitamin C*	2,500 mg (half a rounded teaspoon of pure ascorbic acid) daily in divided doses	5,000 mg (1 rounded teaspoon of pure ascorbic acid) daily in divided doses	7,500 mg (1.5 rounded teaspoons of pure ascorbic acid) daily in divided doses	10,000 mg (2 rounded teaspoons of pure ascorbic acid) daily in divided doses
Zinc†	10 mg	10 mg	15 mg	25 mg

*Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) should be taken throughout the day and evening to maintain blood levels. The daily dose of powder can easily be dissolved in warm water which can then be chilled, diluted to taste and taken throughout the day, in divided doses. It can also be taken in tablet or capsule form, for instance in 500 mg and/or 1000mg capsules several times a day. Note: Too much vitamin C may give you loose bowels. This is not an adverse effect but rather a sign that you have taken enough and can reduce the dose slightly.

† Zinc supplements (e.g. citrate, monomethionine forms) should preferably be consumed with main meals that do not contain cereals or grains given these can reduce zinc absorption. Alternatively, zinc gluconate may be consumed between meals in lozenges.

⁹ [ANH Food4Kids guidelines.](#)

¹⁰ [ANH Food4Health guide.](#)

¹¹ [ANH Food4Health vegan guide](#)

¹² Ifland, J, Marcus MT, Preuss HG (Eds). Processed Food Addiction: Foundations, Assessment, and Recovery. CRC Press. [[Amazon UK](#)].

¹³ [NDNS, Headline results \(2008/2009 – 2010/11\)](#)