

# Do the nervous system and immune system work together to keep us healthy?

Today we are all concerned about staying healthy and avoiding sickness. And we know the big three when it comes to prevention: a healthy diet, regular exercise, and quality sleep. Embracing these habits helps our body ward off disease. And if we do get sick it helps lessen the symptoms and enables us to get well faster. In short, we are strengthening our body's immune system.

But is there more?

While not conclusive, new research has uncovered what is believed to be a direct interaction between our immune system – and our nervous system. Put simply, the nervous system may play a role in regulating immune responses, for example, during an infection.

Our nervous system controls vital functions -- breathing, heart beating, posture, responding to pain, even our emotions. A healthy nervous system is essential to our quality of life. The nervous and immune systems have long been thought to be separate

entities in the body. But through on-going research we are beginning to understand more about how our nervous system and our immune system interact to keep us healthy.



**Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick**

Let's consider our emotions, specifically our response to stress – which seems to be an increasing issue today with the pandemic coupled with the demands of modern life. Instinctively, we know getting that run down feeling – from

pushing ourselves and lack of quality sleep – can result in getting sick. Perhaps we should pay more attention to our stress levels and embrace habits that may help us maintain a healthier nervous system and improve our chances of avoiding sickness. So, the question

becomes are there specific things we can do to strengthen our nervous system? It so happens there are:

- It may sound strange. Take a pen and paper and write something for ten minutes each day. Your nervous system's pathways, receptors, and nerves must all react in a precise and coordinated way in order for you to form neat letters and legible words.

- Fill your lungs with fresh air, hold your breath for a few seconds, and exhale slowly. Do this for ten minutes a day. Plus, you will feel a lot better.

- Walk barefoot. Who knew! Yet, studies have shown blood viscosity, heart rate and inflammation all benefit from walking barefoot.

- Yoga. Similar to deep breathing exercises, Yoga can improve mood and reduce stress. We are all busy. But we must take time for ourselves. This may be a very beneficial "time out".

And again, there is nothing better than a good brisk walk. Be thankful for each day.

Take a deep breath; all will be well. Call with questions. We are your hometown resource for guidance and support.

*Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick is the owner of Grand Oaks Dental, located at 3905 Liberty Highway in Anderson. A strong believer that dental fear and anxiety should not prevent any patient from receiving the highest quality dental care, Dr. Cannick has received extensive training in Sedation Dentistry and is a certified member of the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation. She is also a member of the South Carolina Dental Association, the American Dental Association, the Academy of General Dentistry, and the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine.*

*For more information about Grand Oaks Dental and the services provided, please call 864-224-0809, or click to [grandoaksdental.com](http://grandoaksdental.com) or visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrandOaksDental>*



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