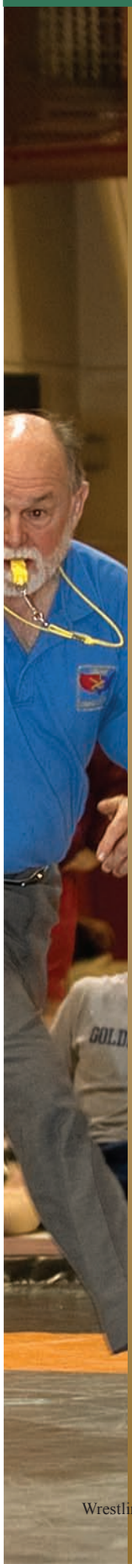

Does your immune system function properly? If not then maybe it's time you consider the necessary steps for a healthy lifestyle. The immune system is one of the most remarkable and complex systems within an individual's body. It has the ability to produce a million specific antibodies, do so within a minute, and to recognize and fight a billion different type of antigens (invaders). The immune system's ability to react to a new invader makes all the difference in one's recovery period from various illnesses. The three main types of immune cells found within our blood are known as: B-cells, T-cells, and Macrophages. An individual's B-cells produce antibodies for each specific invader or antigen. Antibodies can't destroy bacteria and viruses, but they can give them a difficult time. They assist with stopping bacteria-producing toxins, and prevent viruses from entering our body cells.

Remember: no man is an island. The human body does not operate independently, but as a sum total of its many parts. To address the complexities of the immune system in a short summary will not do the topic justice. However, the immune system is composed of both a 1st and 2nd line of defense: T-Cells and B-Cells. The cellular intelligence to know the difference between "self" and imposter cells is nothing short of a miracle. To keep the body in top form for fighting disease in its many forms (dis-ease) anywhere from fatigue and lack of sleep to aids, cancer, and heart disease, lifestyle plays an integral role. Individuals can control some factors, such as the necessities of getting adequate sleep, and sustaining a fitness program and healthy dietary habits. These cannot be over-emphasized in helping the body do its utmost to maintain a healthy immune system. But then there are the factors over which we have little or no control: factors such as stress from training and competition, personal issues, and just trying to function in our fast paced society.

What one eats and drinks plays a specific role in how his/her body functions. As athletes we can not expect to perform well if we don't practice daily healthy dietary habits. We need to give a consideration to what we are putting into our bodies and how those things may affect our immune system, ultimately leading to poor performances and health related issues. Some of us constantly starve our bodies, or overload with chemicals, additives, or alcohol in excess. All these situations send waves of distress throughout one's body system and affect our immune system. All individuals have the capability to fight off any negative antigens; sometimes with illness our ability to fight is limited. There are five different types of antibodies: IgG, immunoglobulin being the major variety. It circulates throughout all blood and tissues within the body. IgA, although a minority antibody, is situated within the intestinal secretions and effects food tolerances. IgE the least prolific of the five, but appears to cause the major allergic reactions. Various foreign particles can trigger an immune reaction even though they are not pathogens and do not cause an infection. Individuals become sensitive to them and asthma is an example of this type of allergic reaction.

What are the Immune system's primary functions? Its main purpose is to identify and rid our bodies of invaders. The immune system is our body's defense against infectious organisms and other invaders. It is comprised of special cell proteins, tissues, and organs that defend individuals against germs and microorganisms every day. It functions less effectively when toxicity caused by habits of inappropri-