



Boosting Immune Health

A healthy immune system can provide protection and help prevent illness, or shorten the duration of symptoms.

Immune Supporting Nutrients

- **Beta-Carotene** (Vitamin A pre-cursor) stimulates the production and activity of white blood cells. It is found in leafy green vegetables, carrots, cantaloupe, mangos and tomatoes.
- **Vitamin C** plays a role in controlling infection and making collagen, which is weaved throughout various body systems including the immune system. Main sources include citrus fruits, berries, cruciferous vegetables, bell peppers and tomatoes.
- **Vitamin E** acts as an antioxidant and enhances immune function. It's found in plant-based oils, nuts, seeds, leafy greens, pumpkin, mangoes and bell peppers.
- **Vitamin D** deficiency is linked to increased autoimmunity and increased susceptibility of infection. Dietary sources include fatty fish, eggs and fortified milk and juices, but the best source of Vitamin D is actually the sun.
- **Zinc** is a major player in healing damaged tissues and supporting a healthy immune system. The most absorbable sources come from animal products like meat and seafood, but good plant sources include nuts, seeds, legumes and whole grains.
- **Probiotics** are the "good" bacteria in your gut that promote health and a huge portion of your immune system is actually in your gastrointestinal tract. They are found in cultured dairy products like yogurt, and fermented foods like kimchi.
- **Protein** is key for building and repairing body tissues, antibodies and immune system cells, as well as fighting infection. Found in both animal and plant foods, including eggs, milk, yogurt, meat, seafood, nuts, seeds, beans, and legumes.

Lifestyle and Immune Health

Eat a healthy, anti-inflammatory diet. Choose more whole, plant based foods, which are packed with immune boosting nutrients, as well as anti-inflammatory properties. Animal products are shown to increase inflammation which leads to compromised immune function.

Stay active. Physical activity reduces stress, manages weight, reduces blood pressure and improves general health, therefore improving immunity.

Stress can also impact your immune health and often boosts inflammation. It's important to find healthy ways to cope with and manage your stress, such as physical activity, meditation or journaling.

Practice self-care. This is vital for supporting your overall wellbeing by doing things like staying hydrated, meditation, yoga, or journaling.

Sleep deficiency is linked to a weakened immune system. The recommendation for adults is 7-9 hours of sleep each night.

Maintain a healthy weight. Carrying excess weight is linked to increased inflammation, which compromises your immune system.

Proper hygiene and hand-washing is an important way to minimize the spread of germs. Wash your hands after using the restroom and before eating, and try to avoid touching your face to prevent the transfer of germs throughout the day.

Don't smoke, and limit alcohol consumption. They both cause inflammation and chronic inflammation can impair your immune function.

Source: eatright.org, health.harvard.edu

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