

Nutrition 101 January 2013

BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY

Did You Know?

What you eat effects your immune system. Although there isn't 1 food that will provide an instant boost, developing the habit of eating a healthy, balanced diet keeps your immune system in good s

Eat More Antioxidants.

Antioxidants are substances that prevent or reduce free radicals in your body. Free radicals are reactive compounds that have the potential to damage DNA and suppress the immune system.

Studies show that people who eat more antioxidants in their diet may be better protected against some kinds of cancer. Vitamins C, E, and A are antioxidants, as are other compounds called flavonoids that are found in fruits and vegetables. Increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables in your diet is the optimal way to get antioxidant. Unless you are a strict vegetarian or have a special-needs diet or are pregnant, there is no convincing proof that taking vitamin supplement will help. You should talk to your health care provider to decide if vitamin supplements are for you.

Get the nutrients you need by eating a balanced diet with fruits and vegetables. It's not uncommon for the American diet to lack enough calcium or Vitamins C or A. Being slightly deficient in some nutrients may not wreck your immune system, but it can mean you're not getting what you need for it to function at top strength.



Eat less saturated fat.

Diets high in sat fat can suppress the immune system. Try to keep fat to about 30% of your total calories and opt for healthy fats – omega 3 fatty acids



Drink tea.

Green tea contains antioxidants called catechins which studies show may help protect against cancer & the common cold



Want to try something new?

Kefir

Similar to yogurt, but cultured with special kefir grains. Originally from the Middle East, kefir has a sour, refreshing taste. Unlike the bacteria in yogurt, which are transient and pass through the system over time, the bacteria in kefir are capable of colonizing in the intestinal tract. Kefir also contains good yeasts that fight off pathogenic yeasts in the body.

Remember!

Not only do you have to practice healthy eating but healthy living too! Make sure to stay hydrated, get plenty of sleep and an ample amount of physical activity every day. Healthy living is not just about what you consume but how you live each day.

Top 7 Foods to Boost Your Immune System

Yogurt: packed with good bacteria called probiotics. Studies have shown eating yogurts rich in probiotics can lead to an improved immune response by increasing the body's white blood cell count.

Turmeric: a rich, flavorful spice used in traditional Chinese medicines in addition to cooking. Turmeric is found in yellow curry and the golden color is a result of curcumin, a polyphenol with strong cold and flu-fighting properties.

Garlic: also known as a miracle food, garlic's immune-boosting properties come from its sulfur-containing compounds (which give the bulb its aroma). These compounds are effective against bacterial, viral, fungal and parasitic infections. They also enhance the immune system and have anti-tumor and antioxidant features, which help guard cells from everyday wear and tear.

Red Bell Peppers: low in calories & high in nutrients, good source of phytochemicals as well as beta-carotenes and vitamin C. Gram-for-gram, red bell peppers have twice the vitamin C of most vitamin C containing fruits and vegetables including oranges! Vitamin C is known to maintain the skin, the body's first line of defense against infection.

Ginger: contains a compound called gingerol, a relative of capsaicin (the compound that gives chili peppers their heat), when dried ginger contains less gingerol and more shogaol, an anti-inflammatory agent. Ginger is often recommended as a tea or a bath for those with a cold because it is helpful in increasing sweat production, which may get rid of toxins. Ginger also may reduce nausea and vomiting.

Oysters: known as nature's aphrodisiac, oysters contain a high amount of zinc, which protects the body against colds and flu. Zinc enhances the function of helper T cells, which are important in identifying foreign antigens and alerting other cells to invaders. Be careful, too much zinc can be toxic, the FDA recommends 11 mg per day, other good sources include lean meats, pumpkin seeds and beans.

Broccoli: excellent source of vitamins A, C and E. Broccoli is high in glucosinolates, which stimulate the body's immune system. Broccoli doubles as a powerful food with its high concentration of sulforaphanes, potent anti-cancer agents.

Have more questions? Feel free to contact Karen Goldberg, RD at Karen@nutrition101.net