

Monthly
Wellness
SpotLight
by PSA



IN GOOD HEALTH

NOW IS THE TIME TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM!

In the current COVID-19/influenza landscape, many of us are concerned and scared to become ill. Below I will share several natural ways to boost your immune system and help your body fight illness.

1. **Sleep**—Your immunity is linked to the amount of sleep you get. Poor sleep increases your chance to contract illness. Adults should get 7 or more hours of sleep every night, teenagers need 8-10 hours, and young children and infants need up to 14 hours per night. If you are having difficulty sleeping, speak to your health care provider.
2. **Eat Healthy**—Fill your diet with healthy foods like fruits, nuts, and seeds. These foods have antioxidants, fiber, and vitamin C, which are all proven to boost the immune system.
3. **Eat Probiotics**—Did you know fermented foods, like sauerkraut and yogurt, are rich in probiotics? Probiotics love your digestive tract and work to make it healthy. Research from the National Institute of Health (NIH) has shown that a healthy gut can help your immune system differentiate between healthy and unhealthy organisms, which they work to destroy. If you don't like fermented foods, check with your health care provider about taking a probiotic supplement.
4. **Reduce Your Sugar Intake**—Sugar contributes to weight gain, diabetes, and heart disease. All off these conditions increase your risk for getting sick. Your sugar intake should be less than 5% of your daily calories (about 2 tablespoons for a 2,000-calorie diet).
5. **Exercise**—Moderate exercise can assist the healthy turnover of immune cells, thereby, keeping your immune system strong.
6. **Manage Your Stress**—According to the NIH, stress and anxiety can suppress your immune system. Let your health care provider know about your stress level, and if your company has an Employee Assistance Program, be sure to check it out.

What are the Best Supplements for My Immune System?

As always, you should speak to your health care provider before taking any supplements. With that said, what are the best supplements for your immune system?

- **Vitamin C**—Likely the most important immune booster. Lack of vitamin C has been shown to increase your chance for getting sick. All citrus as well as strawberries, bell peppers, spinach, kale, and broccoli are loaded with vitamin C. A diet full of all of these foods will likely give you enough Vitamin C, so supplements aren't necessary, but if you feel a cold or illness coming on, it may be a good idea to increase your intake.
- **Vitamin B6**—Chicken, salmon, tuna, and chickpeas are all rich in B6. Its role is to support the biochemical reactions in the immune system.
- **Vitamin E**—Offers an important antioxidant which helps the body fight off infection. Foods rich in vitamin C include nuts, seeds, and spinach.
- **Zinc**—It's important for immune cell development and communication. There are 100 different enzymes in the body that depend on zinc. Good sources of zinc include mussels, oysters, and Alaskan King Crab.

Grocery Store Savvy

As we have learned, fruits and vegetables are key to strengthening our immune systems – the more colorful your diet, the better. Not only will your plate look pretty, but you will ensure you get the vitamins and nutrients your body needs to ward off infection.

You can make several lifestyle and dietary changes to strengthen your immune system. Why not work to make changes today? In addition to a healthier immune system, you will likely feel better, too!