

Ten Immune-Boosting Tips

1. **VITAMINS AND MINERALS:** Avoiding deficiencies in key nutrients – specifically A, C, D, E, B-12, B-6, folate, copper, iron, selenium and zinc – can enhance immunity by helping your body form antibodies and fight infections. Deficiencies (except for Vitamin D) are often prevented or corrected with a whole food meal and snack plan. However, for many people supplementation is needed in the form of a well-formulated multivitamin-mineral supplement. Ideally, increase your intake of Vitamin C-rich foods. Most experts feel that 200-400 milligrams of Vitamin C daily is optimal. In general, avoid megadose supplements.
2. **EAT WELL:** Aim for a Mediterranean meal plan, which is made up of whole foods, including colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, legumes, olives, olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado and fatty fish. Cultured dairy items like yogurt and kefir are used moderately; cheese, eggs and chicken sparingly; and red meat rarely. Animal proteins are used only as a side dish, while plant-based eating is emphasized.
3. **IMMUNE-BOOSTING FOODS:** Include the following in your meal plans: beta carotene-rich foods (sweet potatoes, carrots, squash, pumpkin and cantaloupe), mushrooms, fish, oats, barley, raw garlic, live active cultures found in yogurt, kefir, soy-based products (tempeh, miso, natto) and sauerkraut. Increase your intake of colorful fruits and vegetables.
4. **SPICE IT UP:** Add herbal seasonings to your foods. Some herbs contain antiviral, antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties. Choose from the following: clove, oregano, thyme, cinnamon, cumin, rosemary, ginger, curry, turmeric and garlic cloves.
5. **STAY HYDRATED:** Dehydration slows the immune system's ability to reach and fight microorganisms. Make water the beverage of choice and include a few cups of green tea for an immune boost.
6. **EXERCISE:** Regular, moderate physical activity improves immunity.
7. **FRESH AIR AND SUNSHINE:** Both are immune boosters.
8. **SLEEP:** Get more of it! Less than six hours a night can impair immunity and slow the healing process.
9. **PSYCHOIMMUNOLOGY:** Positive and hopeful feelings enhance immunity. No surprise that 800 years ago the Rambam taught physicians to make sure a patient has a hopeful frame of mind.
10. **RELAX:** Seek out social support, engage in calming activities and take a walk (without your cell phone!)

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