

SUPPORT YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM WITH GOOD NUTRITION

Good nutrition is essential to a strong immune system which will offer protection from colds and viruses. Here are some ideas on how you can support your immune system.

Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables, which provide essential nutrients such as beta-carotene, vitamin C, and vitamin E.

Make sure you are getting enough vitamin D, either from sunlight or a supplement. Adequate vitamin D has been shown to reduce viral and respiratory infections.

Include foods with zinc, which is a mineral that boosts white blood cells to fight off infections. Foods high in zinc include nuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, beans, meat, fish and lentils.

Reduce sugar intake as much as possible since high sugar foods suppress immune function and can last for a few hours after consumption.

Include plenty of garlic and onions which have antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties.

Mushrooms are rich in minerals and antioxidants and all varieties have antiviral and antibacterial effects.

Include plenty of probiotic rich foods such as naturally fermented vegetables, yogurt and kefir.

Drink tea. Black, green and white teas have been shown to fight colds and flu.

Include whole grains such as oats and barley. They contain a substance called beta glucan which boosts immunity.

Use plenty of herbs and spices. Kitchen herbs not only make you food taste better, many of them have powerful antiviral and antibacterial properties. Some of the best ones include oregano, sage, basil, fennel, lemon balm, rosemary, peppermint, thyme, turmeric and ginger.

Lindsay D'Amato, MPH, RD, LDN, CDE
Fairview Dietician