



6 Ways to Boost Your Immune System Naturally

Immune System

The system in humans and other animals that provides immunity by protecting against disease-causing agents, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi. The immune system is composed of the skin and mucous membranes, which provide an external barrier to infection, and the cells involved in the body's immune response.

How the Immune System Works

Our immune system is essential for our survival. Without an immune system, our bodies would be open to attack from bacteria, viruses, parasites, and more. It is our immune system that keeps us healthy as we drift through a sea of pathogens.

This vast network of cells and tissues is constantly on the lookout for invaders, and once an enemy is spotted, a complex attack is mounted.

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Now more than ever we must understand that Our Health Is Our Wealth even the healthiest of people get sick every now and then. But by fine-tuning certain aspects of your health routine, such as diet and stress management, you can help support your immune system's defenses against bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens that cause conditions like the common cold and flu.

#1 Diet

Following a diet rich in antioxidants is essential to supporting your immune system. Abundant in many fruits and vegetables, antioxidants combat free radicals—chemical byproducts known to damage DNA and suppress the immune system.¹

Choosing healthy fats (such as the omega-3 fatty acids available in oily fish, flaxseed, and krill oil) over saturated fats (found in meat and dairy products) is generally recommended by health authorities.

Drinking plenty of water helps cells operate efficiently and allows your body to process food and eliminate waste.

For an additional immune boost, try adding garlic (shown to possess virus-fighting and bacteria-killing properties)³ and ginger (a natural anti-inflammatory) to your meals on a regular basis.

#2 Exercise

The good news is that regular moderate-intensity exercise confers several benefits to the immune system. A 2019 study shows that moderate exercise mobilizes immune system cells, helping the body defend itself against pathogens and cancer cell growth. Those who regularly engage in this type of exercise have fewer illnesses and less systemic inflammation. Exercise may also protect the immune system from the effects of aging.

Regularly engaging in intense, vigorous activity like running, on the other hand, may temporarily weaken your immune function and leave you more susceptible to viral infections. Proper nutrition and hydration are important with prolonged and intense exercise, and research is ongoing as to what athletes must do to stay healthy.

#3 Stress Reduction

Chronic stress can have a negative impact on immunity, according to a landmark 2004 review of 293 studies with a total of 18,941 participants. The review suggests that while short-term exposure to stressors can rev up your immune defense, prolonged stress may wear down the immune system and increase your vulnerability to illness.

Addressing chronic stress is something you can take action on. To keep your stress in check, incorporate a relaxing practice like meditation, yoga, or deep breathing into your daily routine.

#4 Sleep

Another healthy habit vital to preventing sickness is getting a full eight hours of sleep each night, which may help regulate immune function.

A study of over 22,000 people found that those who slept less than six hours per night or who had a sleep disorder were more likely to have colds and other respiratory infections.

#5 Hygiene

Simply keeping your hands clean is one of the best ways to ward off illness, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Make sure to wash your hands for 20 seconds using warm water and soap before preparing food or eating, as well as after coughing, sneezing, using the bathroom, or touching public surfaces.

#6 Herbs and Supplements

Although scientists have yet to determine whether vitamin C can enhance immunity, there's some evidence that this antioxidant can reduce cold incidence. Herbs such as andrographis, AHCC, astragalus, echinacea, and elderberry are among those people use in the belief they may help reduce the duration and severity of sickness if taken as soon as cold or flu symptoms arise. However, scientific support for claims that any vitamin, herb, or supplement can prevent or treat colds and other infectious illnesses is limited.