



How to Keep Your Immune System Strong

Description

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Your body's immune system helps to protect you against infection. If your immune system – your inbuilt defence system – is in tip-top condition then you will be far less vulnerable to diseases of all types. Your body will also be better able to fight cancer and it will also be more able to resist viruses, colds and the flu.

By Dr. Vernon Coleman

The trouble is that all sorts of things can damage your immune system. Top problems are a poor diet, too much stress, loneliness, frustration, not enough exercise, too little sunshine, not enough fresh air going into your lungs – and so on. Some types of drugs can also interfere with immune systems.

Moreover, we all build up our immune systems through contact with one another. Staying apart from other people, for whatever reason, reduces the effectiveness of our immune systems and increases our susceptibility to infections of all kinds. If we lock ourselves in our homes, for example, then we could damage the effectiveness of our immune systems.

So, what can you do to help keep your immune system strong – and to counter all that bad stuff that can happen?

Finding out exactly what you should eat isn't as easy as it should be. The truth is shrouded in mystery and confusion – much of it created, quite deliberately, on behalf of vested interests, by lobbyists, advertising agencies and public relations groups.

Politicians and modern mainstream pseudo-journalists are always unreliable and invariably deliberately dishonest. Sadly, these days most health writers merely share press releases they've been sent. Too many are just plain crooked and are paid to promote certain foods. I don't accept sponsorship, advertising or free samples. My only income comes from my books.

The big thing to remember is that what you choose to eat can have a big effect on the strength and effectiveness of your immune system.

Most people know what foods they shouldn't eat. They understand that if they live on a diet of hamburgers and chips, followed by chocolate pudding covered with lashings of double cream, and all washed down with a cola drink, then their health will suffer.

So, here's some positive advice to help you keep your immune system healthy and strong.

If you eat **eggs** do not ever buy (or eat) eggs with cracked shells. It is much easier for an infection to enter an egg with a cracked shell. Eggs laid by genuinely free-range chickens (if you can find them) are likely to be healthier than eggs laid by hens kept in battery cages.

Foods which contain **antioxidants** (such as vitamins C and E, the mineral selenium and beta-carotene, which is converted in the human body to vitamin A) help prevent cancer and heart disease and reduce susceptibility to infection.

I think all **fats** are bad for your immune system but animal fats are probably worse than others, and can probably do more damage to your immune system. One of the reasons for this is the fact that animal fat is often contaminated with chemical residues – toxic and possibly carcinogenic residues of drugs consumed (accidentally or deliberately) by feeding animals.

It is often difficult to find out how much fat there is in particular foods. And it is often terribly easy to eat foods which contain a lot of fat without realising it. And remember that if you cook in additional fat the effective fat content of the food you are cooking will rise – often dramatically!

Governments often recommend that a healthy diet should contain no more than 30% fat. I think that figure is far too high (probably because a relatively high-fat diet helps keep the food industry rich and happy). I believe that you should aim to have no more than 15-20% fat in your diet. If for some reason you need to follow a low-fat diet you may wish to cut your consumption of fat to 10-15%.

Your body's immune system needs supplies of **vitamins and minerals** in order to function effectively. In particular, in order to help build up your immune system and fight off infections and cancer your body needs regular supplies of foods which contain antioxidants (beta-carotene, vitamin C and vitamin E) and other substances.

Vitamin D deficiency is common among patients with infections. The health risks of vitamin D deficiency are huge. Vitamin D deficiency doesn't just increase the risk of contracting an infection, there is also an increased risk of heart disease, asthma, cancer and dementia. Plus, there is evidence that a low vitamin D could result in high blood pressure, diabetes and multiple sclerosis.

Vitamin D is essential (as are all vitamins, of course) and without it, our bodies simply do not function effectively and cell regeneration is less efficient. And again, here's the vital bit, vitamin D is an essential vitamin for preventing infection. For most people the most important source of vitamin D is sunshine. Spending too much time indoors deprives people of vitamin D and increases the risk of viral infections.

You can get some vitamin D from fortified foods but for many people, the answer is probably taking a vitamin D supplement.

It's worth remembering the value of **zinc** too. Zinc is essential for a healthy immune system and it can help shorten the duration of a cold and make symptoms less severe. Zinc helps your body fight

infections by boosting the production of antibodies. Zinc deficiency may be responsible for 13% of diseases such as pneumonia and flu in children under the age of five. And zinc deficiency is common among the elderly – and a major reason why they are susceptible to infection. The easiest solution is probably regular supplements.

The modern “meat, butter, cheese, milk” diet is death to your body’s immune system not just because those foods are rich in fat but also because they don’t contain much in the way of immune boosting vitamins and minerals. It’s also worth remembering that there is a very strong link between dairy produce and breast cancer.

Your body will get much of the vitamins and minerals it needs to keep your immune system healthy if you eat a diet which is rich in vegetables, fruits and grains.

However, it is vital to be aware that vitamins can easily be destroyed. Mushrooms, lettuce, broccoli, asparagus and strawberries, for example, all lose their vitamins very quickly. Food which has to be cooked should be cooked for the shortest possible time and at the lowest possible temperature.

In order to ensure that the food you eat retains a high vitamin content – and helps keep your immune system healthy– you should follow some simple rules:

- Food processing tends to reduce the nutritional quality of food and so where possible you should try to buy fresh food and either eat it washed and raw (if appropriate) or eat it after cooking for the shortest length of time.
- Buy vegetables whole. Don’t have the leaves removed from carrots or the stalk removed from cabbage or cauliflower. If you buy the vegetable whole vitamin C will continue to be produced and moved into the edible parts of the plant.
- Cook foods in the minimum amount of water or steam, avoid high cooking temperatures and long heat exposure and don’t soak vegetables for long periods.
- Wash but do not peel fruit or vegetables unless necessary. (For example, do not peel apples or skin potatoes).
- Try to use food the day you have bought it rather than use frozen foods. Use foods the day you buy them to get the best out of them.

I also recommend that whenever possible you purchase “organic” produce which has been prepared without chemicals and try to buy food that has not been genetically modified. Remember: genetically modified food has never been tested or shown to be safe. I very much doubt if it is.

The best way to get good, honest food is to grow your own.

Remember that nearly half of all the food sold in supermarkets and stores including fruits, vegetables, and meat – contains potentially dangerous chemical residues. Some chemicals are sprayed onto foods which have grown and which are being picked or shipped to the stores but many chemicals are absorbed when foods are growing and obviously cannot be removed by washing or scraping. Some of the chemicals used by modern farmers are known to cause cancer, asthma and a wide variety of other serious disorders.

Based on material taken from the book Superbody: The secret of survival in the 21st century by Vernon Coleman. Superbody is available on Amazon as a paperback and an eBook.

by Rhoda Wilson

Category

1. Health-Wellness-Healing-Nutrition & Fitness
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