

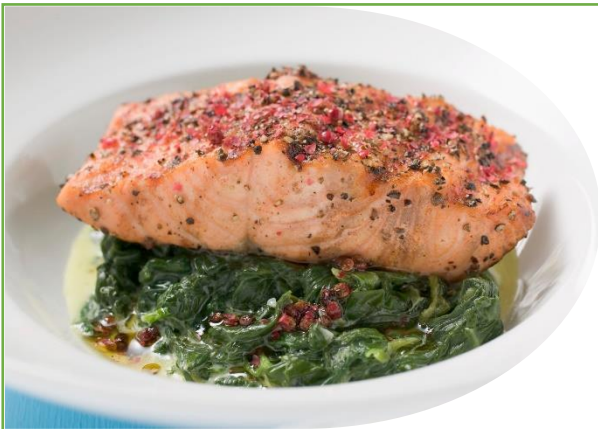
# NUTRITION FOR A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM



To keep all of the body's cells, including immune cells, healthy and well functioning, it is important to eat enough nutrients as part of a varied diet.

Examples of nutrients that have been identified as critical for the growth and function of immune cells include vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc, selenium, iron, and protein (including the amino acid glutamine). Following are some tasty food combinations for you to try:

## NUTRITION THAT FEEDS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM



A great and tasty combination is fatty fish seasoned with garlic and herbs on a bed of spinach.

Garlic contains compounds that help the immune system fight germs and boost the production of virus-fighting T-cells.

Spinach is rich in beta-carotene, which converts into vitamin A, an anti-inflammatory vitamin that can help your antibodies respond to toxins, such as a virus. The healthy oil in the fish will

help your body absorb the vitamin A. Want a vegetarian solution? Try carrots with hummus.

We all know vitamin C is great for the immune system. Instead of drinking a glass of orange juice (which is loaded with sugar) try a bowl of strawberries or mixed berries with some yogurt and nuts. The berries are rich in vitamin C, which is key to fighting infection. Yogurt contains live cultures, also known as probiotics, which are thought to help stimulate the immune system to fight off disease. Seeds and nuts are rich in Vitamin which helps to regulate and support immune system function.



A nice chicken stew with a variety of vegetables, like carrots, spinach, kale, sweet potato, squash, bell peppers and broccoli is great food for a healthy immune system. Zinc found in the chicken helps the immune system cells function at their best. Add some chickpeas for a boost of vitamin B-6, which is essential in the formation of new and healthy red blood cells, and aids in maintaining the lymphatic system.

Another plus: you can make enough for 2-3 meals, which will save you cooking time during the week. Less stress = Stronger immune system!

# MOVEMENT FOR A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM



Science does not know exactly if or how exercise increases your immunity to certain illnesses. There are several theories.

Following are some of them.

## RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

Physical activity may help flush bacteria out of the lungs and airways. This may reduce your chance of getting a cold, flu, or other illness.

## WHITE BLOOD CELLS AND ANTIBODIES

Antibodies and white blood cells (WBC) are the body's immune system cells that fight disease. Exercise may cause these antibodies or WBCs to change and circulate more rapidly, so they could detect illnesses earlier than they might have before.

## BODY TEMPERATURE

Exercise results in a brief rise in body temperature during and right after the workout. This temperature change may prevent bacteria from growing and may help the body fight infection better. (This is similar to what happens when you have a fever.)

## STRESS

Stress can increase the chance of illness. Exercise slows down the release of stress hormones. Lower stress hormones may protect against illness.

However, it is important not to overdo it. Overtraining can lead to chronic fatigue, decreased performance and mood disturbances, and lowered immune function, increasing the chances of infections.

### How much exercise is good for me?

Studies show that 30 to 60 minutes of daily exercise at a moderate and challenging intensity level, such as a brisk walk, can help you improve your body's defenses.

In addition to cardiovascular training, you can also incorporate 2-3 sessions of strength training into your exercise regimen. There are many exercises you can do using your body weight or inexpensive equipment like resistance bands.

# MANAGE STRESS FOR A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM



Natural killer cells or lymphocytes are needed to fight viruses. Stress can reduce the number of those cells, leaving our body with less protections against illness

Stress can also cause the immune system to produce an inflammatory response. This can be beneficial for fighting germs when it is temporarily. However, persistent and widespread inflammation can contribute to chronic diseases.

Chronic stress can produce higher-than-normal levels of the hormone cortisol, which can hamper the body's anti-inflammatory response and cause continual infections.

Learning how to manage stress can help strengthen the immune system. Following are some suggestions for everyday life:

## ME TIME



Taking time for yourself is one of the best ways to lower your stress levels. Our days are filled with work, chores and taking care of others and if we don't take the time to recharge our own batteries, we end up stressed, exhausted and more prone to become sick. Even if it is just 15 minutes of quiet time with a cup of coffee in the morning, make it a daily habit to carve out some time to do something you enjoy.

## JOURNALING

Journaling is like talking to a friend who just listens. Writing down your thoughts and feelings helps you to unload your anxieties, frustrations and pains on a journal. This can help you to reduce and release any stress which has accumulated over time. Taking some time in the evening to write down the day's events can help you calm your mind and even sleep better.



## MEDITATION



A simple body scan can help bring your mind back to the present moment, away from worries about the past and anxiety about the future.

Sit in a comfortable position (on a chair or on the floor).

Close your eyes and take a couple of deep breaths. Then simply bring your awareness to your body and slowly observe every inch of it, starting at your feet and moving up all the way to your head.



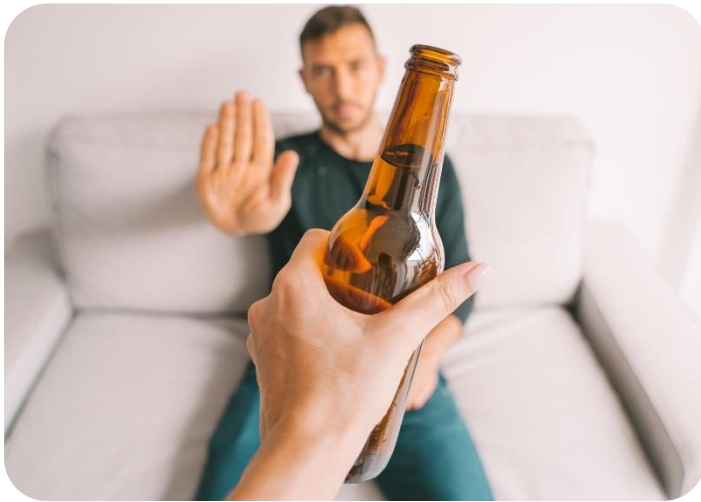
# HEALTH HABITS FOR A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM



## GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Aim for at least 7-9 hours of sleep.

The right amount within this range is different for everybody. Observe how you feel in the morning and adjust, if you wake up still feeling tired or barely rested. Studies have shown that lack of sleep can even affect the effectiveness of vaccines.



## DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol does weaken the immune system, when consumed excessively. Moderate alcohol use — defined as one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men — is generally considered safe, and likely doesn't weaken the immune system significantly. So, enjoy in moderation.

## STOP SMOKING

Smoking not just compromises your lungs, it also weakens your immune system. It has to constantly fight against inflammation and damage from tobacco, causing your white blood cell count to remain elevated for a long time.



## PREVENT MINOR INFECTIONS

Minor infections can weaken your immune system. To prevent them do the following:

- Wash your hands well frequently
- Wash and bandage all cuts and minor injuries.
- Have serious cuts and injuries examined by a doctor
- Don't pick at healing wounds or blemishes
- Don't squeeze pimples