

### NUTRITION TIPS FOR BUILDING UP YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

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A Message for All Team Members

Taking good care of our health is one of the best ways to prevent illness in addition to ADEQUATE HANDWASHING. Ways to support our health is to eat healthy, drink plenty of water, minimize stress and get adequate sleep. Here are some ways to support our immune system and protect our health.

1. Eating a healthy diet that consists of whole grains, a rainbow of colors in fruits and vegetables (Fresh, Frozen or canned), lean proteins (chicken, lean beef, fish, beans and lentils) and healthy fats (nuts, seeds, olive oil) can ensure that our bodies are getting the necessary nutrients it needs to keep our immune system strong.
2. Vitamin A is an antioxidant and helps to regulate the immune system. Vitamin A also plays an important role in maintaining the bodies tissues to keep infections out. Vitamin A is found in carrots, red bell peppers, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, spinach and broccoli.
3. Vitamin C is a powerhouse at boosting the immune system. It supports the production of white blood cells and formation of antibodies. Adequate amounts of the water-soluble vitamin are easily obtainable by diet. Include citrus fruits, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, spinach and potatoes.
4. Zinc helps keep the immune system strong and functioning properly. Zinc can be found in pumpkin seeds, spinach, mushrooms, beans and meat.
5. Protein helps build and repair the bodies tissues as well as the production of antibodies and immune system cells. A protein source should be included at each meal and snack. Good sources of protein are eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, meat, beans and lentils.
6. Vitamin D supports the immune system and studies has shown people deficient in vitamin D are more susceptible to illness. Vitamin D is produced by the body when exposed to sunlight. Many of us, especially in Michigan do not get enough sunlight exposure in the winter. Dietary sources of vitamin D include egg yolks, salmon and vitamin D fortified foods like milk, orange juice and cereals.
7. Vitamin E is another antioxidant that helps prevent free radicals in the body and support our immune function. Vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin that can be found in natural nut butters, almonds, peanuts, hazelnuts, whole grains and sunflower oil.
8. Get adequate sleep to give the body time for rest and recovery. Adults should aim to get 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night with children and teens needing more. Try to get to bed earlier, turn off screens an hour before bed, keep your bedroom cool and try to maintain the same bedtime and wake up schedule each day.
9. Exercise also helps with immune function and is important to try to get at least 30 minutes of activity a day. If you are not feeling well, listen to your body and what it needs. These are stressful times and stress can impact our immune function, try to use exercise to help to minimize stress.

**Please Note: This will not prevent you from getting sick, but it can give you a better chance at staying healthy.**