



Our own immunity to diseases and viruses is of particular importance at this current time. Not only trying to feed our families during CO-VID lockdown, but to help us keep healthy too. The simple fact is there is no one nutrient that helps keeps our body's immune system in tip top condition. Currently, there is a lot of confusion and anxiety. This fact sheet aims to help clear the fog.

Your body needs a variety of nutrients in order to keep your immune system working effectively. What foods / nutrients should you eat that will help your immunity? Here is a list:

- **Selenium:** Selenium has a role in protein synthesis and enzyme reactions. It also has been linked to reducing incident rates of cancer. As well as supplements, it can be found in whole grains, Brazil nuts, some seafood and organ meats, such as liver.
- **Iron:** not only does it help transport oxygen around the body by helping producing red blood cells, it also plays a role in immunity. Red meats, almonds, prunes, cashew nuts, lentils, spinach are all good sources.
- **Zinc:** helps the body perceive taste, boosts the immune system, and may also influence depression. As well as supplements, Zinc is in whole grains, oysters, beans, and nuts.
- **B Vitamins:** Vitamin B12, folate, or vitamin B9 and B6, are all linked to our immune system. Sources of B vitamins include eggs, meat, poultry, fish, oysters, milk, whole grains
- **Copper:** helps maintain healthy bones, blood vessels, nerves, and immune function. Dark Chocolate, nuts, seeds, leafy greens, avocado and sweet potatoes are all sources.
- **Vitamin D:** get outside and get some sun. Vitamin D has been shown to help in immunity as well as bone health. So if it is damp and grey, get fortified breakfast cereals and milk (plant based alternatives will have vitamin D added) and oily fish such as mackerel and salmon. Expose arms and legs for 15 minutes a day between 10 am and 3pm in the sun to get your daily dose before applying sun screen.
- **Vitamins A and C:** both are required by the body to help repair cells damaged by free radicals such as premature cell death, aging and cell mutations. Vitamin C has been shown to reduce the length of the common cold.



Here are some top tips to keep your immune system in the best of health:

- Take a source of vitamin C with your meal. A glass of orange juice or a piece of fruit helps your body get more nutrients from food. For example, a boiled egg with a glass of orange juice for breakfast, helps release 3 x more iron from the egg.
- Aim for 5 a day. One portion can be measured by the size of the palm of your hand. Go for a variety of colours, starchy and non starchy, tinned, frozen, or fresh. Juice also counts as 1 of your five a day.
- Eat more plant based foods and don't cut out meat completely. By increasing the amount of plant food in our diet you increase the diversity of healthy gut bacteria. A significant portion of immune cells are produced in the gut. Also more gut bacteria leads to a healthier gut which leads to more nutrients being absorbed and waste effectively eliminated from your body!
- Tea and coffee can have the reverse effect of vitamin C. So wait a couple of hours after breakfast to have your caffeine boost.
- Don't cut out food groups or be overly restrictive as you may cut out important sources of immunity.
- Canned and frozen fruit and veg are just as good a source of nutrients as fresh. Don't get overly anxious also if you can't get organic.





What else could you do? .

- Try to get 7 – 8 hours sleep a night
- Try and have 1.5 litres of fluid a day to maintain hydration levels.
- If you get sick and don't have much appetite:
 - Canned soup or homemade soup made by your family.
 - If you feel hungry and don't want to cook, microwave rice or frozen meals are fine too.
- Fresh foods that keep the longest are:
 - Potatoes
 - Sweet Potatoes
 - Carrots
 - Onions
 - Root Veg
- Don't beat yourself up, you are doing an amazing job. Jack Munroe has some amazing recipe ideas too if you are stuck.
- If you have elderly neighbours, check on them and make sure they have enough food. Malnutrition or not eating enough can weaken your immune system.
- If you want to up calories for someone not getting enough or if they are unwell, then use extra cream or cheese. Milk powder can also be added to a milk shake or meal replacement shake for additional calories and protein.

A warning for you: If a diet makes a claim that sounds too good to be true, then it probably is and won't be back by evidence based science. The latest was garlic helping in reducing the risk of getting Co-Vid. No it won't and plus it is a high FODMAP food so if you have IBS or are prone to gut issues when training, then symptoms could be increased.

So, here are a few ideas on how you can incorporate some food and snacks into your daily routine that will help your immunity!

- Falafel. Good for you, full of healthy fats and wholegrain. Good source of Iron too.
- Start your day with an egg. Eggs contain Vitamin D, iron, and B12. Omelette, boiled, scrambled. How do you eat yours?
- Dark chocolate with nuts and dates, make a great energy bar and are full of nutrients. Copper, folate, zinc and iron are in them. Brazil nuts are a source of selenium too.
- Tuna Niçoise salad with watercress and beans and boiled eggs would make a great lunch. Add green lentils, peppers and have a dressing made up of olive oil, lemon, garlic, herbs and white wine vinegar.
- Baked potato with various fillings also makes a good meal. Cottage cheese is a good source of Vitamin B12
- Veg sticks with houmous and guacamole.
- Fortified breakfast cereals will also help you start the day right!
- Shop brought pizza? Add extra veg to it so you get your five a day.
- Lasagne for dinner? Add a salad to go with it for extra crunch, texture and nutrients.
- Quick cook noodles with meat, veg and spices makes a great quick stir fry.

For more information on how I can help you from Nutritional Assessments to Health Reboots and other services please get in contact.



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