

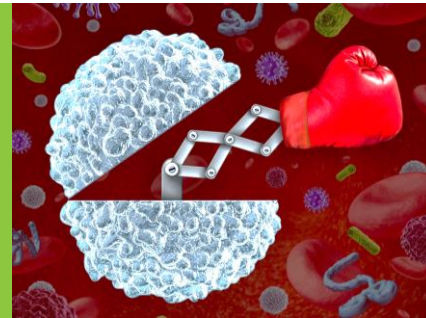
GIVE A GIFT TO YOURSELF

HAVE A HEALTHY HOLIDAY

December – The days are short, the weather is cold, and we spend more time indoors sharing germs with other people. It's the perfect setup for cold and flu viruses to attack right before you are about to host the family holiday get-together. Despite what mom said every time you went out the door with your coat unzipped and refused to wear a hat, colds are not caused by cold weather. It's the virus and the state of your immune system that makes you sick. There is plenty that you can do to prevent getting sick this season, and useful strategies to help you recover quickly so that you can enjoy all the special moments the holidays can bring!

SUPPORT YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Your immune system is a complex network of constant protection from invading viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens. It is designed to be your personal defence system, but like any line of defense, it can fail. For the immune system to function well, it requires balance and harmony. A healthy diet, quality sleep, exercise, and stress management can help you achieve that.



EAT IMMUNE-SUPPORTING FOODS.

There is no denying the value of nutrition to nourish the immune system.



- Studies have shown that micronutrient deficiencies in zinc, selenium, iron, copper, folic acid, and vitamins A, B6, C, and E have a negative effect on immune response. Eating plenty of **colour-rich fruits and vegetables** can ensure that you are meeting your micronutrient requirements. If the cold months have you eating less fresh produce, you can help to meet your needs with a quality multivitamin-multimineral supplement.
- A lack of sunlight over the winter months can create a deficiency in vitamin D, which protects from pathogens and modulates the function of the immune system. Including **vitamin D-rich foods** like cod liver oil, eggs, salmon, mackerel, and liver can help keep you strong and healthy for holiday fun and entertaining! If this doesn't sound appealing, opt for a daily supplement and be sure to discuss dosage with your physician.
- **Probiotics** in fermented foods like yogurt contain good bacteria that are found in your gastrointestinal (digestive) tract where approximately 75% of your immune system lives. Experts recommend eating $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 ml) of cultured, unsweetened yogurt per day, or opt for fermented foods like kimchi, kombucha, or sauerkraut.
- **Garlic** has immune-enhancing allium compounds that appear to increase the activity of immune cells that help fight viruses. Try adding fresh garlic to salad, pasta sauce, or stir fry for more flavour and protection!



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AVOID FOODS THAT SUPPRESS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM.

Adjust your diet to fight the good fight.



- Do you feel like a nice steak when you are under the weather? There may be a reason why it doesn't appeal to your palate. Studies have shown that **red meat** has inflammatory markers, which can suppress your immune system. The American Society of Nutrition suggests opting for healthy, lean proteins to support your immune system.



- The sweet taste of **sugar** can get the best of us over the holidays, leaving us susceptible to colds and flu. Studies show that sugar can suppress the immune system by 40% in as little as 30 minutes after ingestion. Removing added sugar from your diet during the holidays can be a challenge. Keep treats like candies, cookies, pastries, and beverages to a bare minimum. Leave the dessert plate on the table and enjoy a bite of your holiday favourites to avoid overeating.



- Fibre fine-tunes the immune system by feeding beneficial microbes and decreases inflammation. **Refined grains** - which are usually more people-pleasing - are often found in holiday baking, breads, and dishes and keep us from the benefits of dietary fibre to the immune system. Use whole grain flours for holiday baking, whole grain breads or rice in the turkey stuffing, or add some fibre-rich foods like oats and fresh fruits and vegetables to compensate.

Exercise

The holidays can have us falling short on physical activity. Exercise won't prevent every infection, but if you come down with the flu, you may have less severe symptoms and recover more quickly. Aim for two 15-minute sweat sessions per day for the best protection. Taking part in a regular exercise routine, specifically cardiovascular exercise like walking, biking, and aerobics, is a great way to strengthen your immune system.



Quality Sleep

Poor sleep can lower your immunity and make you more vulnerable to infection. The amount of sleep needed for a healthy immune system varies from person to person. Are holiday obligations and planning keeping you awake at night? To stay healthy throughout the year, it is recommended that adults aim for seven to eight hours of sleep each night. Older children and teens need more rest - between 9 and 10 hours every night.



Stress Management

Dealing with short bouts of acute stress can be beneficial for your immune system, but chronic stress can alter immune system function and have a negative impact. Stress can be high during a time of close interactions with family and added social obligations and household duties. Take time for 3-4 cleansing breaths a few times a day and limit your to-do list to have a healthy and happy holiday.



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BEAT THE BUG SOUP

Garlic Ginger Chicken Soup

If you find yourself coming down with a case of the sniffles, feast on this soup to aid in recovery and get you back to the holiday festivities!

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp fresh garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp fresh ginger, minced
- 1 tbsp ginger paste (optional)
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 large sweet onion, finely diced
- 2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into pieces
- ½ cup fresh carrot, sliced
- 1 tomato, chopped
- ½ cup mushrooms
- 32 ounces organic chicken broth
- 2 cups coconut water
- 4-6 cups water, depending on preference
- 1 cup fresh spinach

Directions:

1. Heat olive oil in a large pan.
2. Add fresh garlic, fresh ginger, and onion.
3. Cook for 3-4 minutes. Add ginger paste, cayenne pepper, and salt & pepper.
4. Cook for an additional 3-4 minutes, stirring often.
5. Add the chicken broth, coconut water, chicken, tomatoes, mushrooms, and carrots.
6. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Cook on low for up to an hour.
7. Add spinach and let cook for 5 minutes just before serving.

Nutrition Info Per Serving: Calories: 318 | Fat: 12.8g | Chol: 101mg | Sodium: 280mg | Carbs: 14.8g | Pro: 34.8g | Fibre 2.3g | Sugar: 9.5g



Sources: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/how-to-boost-your-immune-system>
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