

YOU CAN BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM, STARTING RIGHT NOW

In the spirit of strengthening your system, make a habit of incorporating these specific food items in your diet

Manila Bulletin · 7 Jul 2020 · B-7 · CHESHIRE QUE, RND, RN, RD

With the uncertainties surrounding the nature of Covid-19 and when the pandemic will end, in the absence of a cure or vaccine, we are left with only one thing that can protect us from being infected—our immune system.



“We can strengthen our immune system in many ways,” said professor Zenaida Velasco, RND, president of Nutritionist Dietitians’ Association of the Philippines. “Avoid smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages, drink adequate amount of water daily, get enough sleep, minimize stress, exercise inside the house, practice personal hygiene, and get 20 minutes of sun exposure in the morning,”

Numerous information in the digital realm has led to confusion over how to combat Covid-19. There are concoctions, recipes, even absurd news about how one should eat bananas to cure the infection!

Professor Velasco sheds light on how food and nutrition can be our weapon in this war against the vicious disease. Proper nutrition is the foundation of health. It is the key to overcoming the threat of the disease.

She emphasizes that there is no specific food that can be considered complete that can solely fight the virus. Nutrients come from a variety of food that is low in refined sugar, sodium, and unhealthy fats that can increase bad cholesterol and triglycerides. Consuming a variety of fresh and nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables can be our armor against the infection. Moreover, drinking water cannot kill the virus. Water, however, helps in flushing out toxins from the body. Buildup of toxins weakens the immune system. “Nutritious food need

not be expensive. It must be affordable and within budget,” said Velasco. These are the three food categories that will surely enhance your immunity.

Protein

It is involved in the production of antibodies that boost the immune system. Good sources are eggs, milk, tofu, fish, dilis, alamang, chicken, cheese, beans, and legumes.

Fruits

They are rich in vitamin C and antioxidants that promote healthy skin, which is a protective barrier from the virus. Buy local and seasonally available fruits like papaya, star apple, banana, pineapple, santol, melon, and guava.

Vegetables

Dark green and leafy vegetables are the best in immune boosting properties. Vitamin A-rich yellow and orange vegetables are good for the respiratory system, especially the lungs. Your top choices are squash, yellow sweet potato or camote, pechay, saluyot, malunggay, carrots, ampalaya, kangkong, alugbati, and talbos ng sili.

It is equally important to pay attention to specific vitamins and minerals that enhance the function of the immune system:

- Vitamin E—It is a potent antioxidant found in vegetable oils, saluyot, peanuts, and butter.
- Vitamin D—It repairs the immune system. It can be obtained through daily sun exposure or found in tuna, mackerel, fortified milk, mushrooms, egg yolk, soy milk, orange juice, and other fortified juices.

“Correct purchasing, storing, preparation, and cooking methods must be observed to prevent infection. Remember to thoroughly cook meat, fish, chicken, and seafood,” says Velasco.

cheshireque@gmail.com/Instagram: @cheshirequerdn

Proper nutrition is the foundation of health. It is the key to overcoming the threat of the disease.