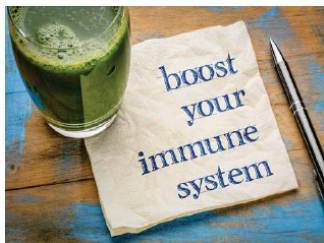


- Virus

# Boosting Your Immune System Against Coronavirus: How To Minimize The Risk Of Infection?

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Covid – 19 or Coronavirus was declared as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization. And while the countries are grappling with imminent dangers that this virus poses to humanity, there are few key measures that individuals can take to fight this pandemic.



While it is crucial to mention hygiene standards like washing your hands frequently, especially if you have travelled by public transport. Using an alcohol sanitizer, in case you are travelling to disinfect your hands, wearing a mask (cover your nose and mouth) and avoiding touching your hand or mouth. There are also certain methods to improve your immunity which is paramount at this juncture. Individuals in certain pre-existing illnesses like diabetes, hypertension, cardio vascular disease, and respiratory issues are at a higher risk of having Covid 19 complications, it also aggravates with age as the general immunity reduces as you get older. In the younger generation with no underlying illnesses, Covid 19 can result in a minor infection, provided you have a robust immunity and do not engage in activities like smoking or vaping to combat the onslaught of the virus. Here is a list of measures you can undertake to improve your immunity.

## Don't Compromise on Sleep

Good snooze time for 7-8 hours is the best way to help your body build immunity; lesser sleep will leave you tired and impair your brain activity. The lack of sleep will prevent the body from resting and this will impair other bodily functions that will have a direct impact on your immunity. Lack of sleep adversely affects the action of the flu vaccine.

Stay Hydrated Drink up to 8-10 glasses of water every day, to stay hydrated. Hydration will help flush out the toxins from the body and lower the chances of flu. Other alternatives include juices made of citrus fruits and coconut water, to beat the heat.

Don't Skip on Exercise A good diet should be followed by an exercise routine. Remember to exercise regularly; even light exercise will go a long way in releasing the toxins from your body. It is recommended to exercise for 30 to 45 minutes, depending on your stamina. If you have not started exercising yet, then it is a good time to start. There are several Youtube channels and apps to help you exercise at home. Regular exercise improves metabolism, which has a direct correlation with body immunity.

Destress Yourself These are testing times, and a prolonged period of staying indoors has its implications on your mental wellbeing. The growing anxiety around the pandemic is another concern that is affecting millions across the globe. While the uncertainty might be overwhelming, there are few steps we can follow regularly to help relieve our stress, stress is known to have an adverse effect on immunity.

Practice meditation Too much stress releases the hormone known as cortisol, which impairs your response to immediate surroundings and makes your body susceptible to infections; you are left feeling constantly anxious. The best way to relieve stress is through meditation, it is a tried and tested activity to calm the nerves. If you need help meditating, then there are several channels on youtube that have instructional resources to help you meditate.

Avoid Smoking, alcohol and other addictive substances Certain habits like smoking, vaping, alcohol consumption and substance abuse have a direct correlation between weakened body defences and respiratory illnesses. Engaging in smoking and vaping is proven to weaken your lung capacity and destroy the cells lining your respiratory tracts, these cells are crucial to fight viruses that enter through your nasal orifices. There is new research claiming that individuals who engage in heavy alcohol consumption tend to suffer from ARDS (Acute Respiratory distress syndrome) which is one of the conditions caused by Covid 19 infection. Practice moderation, if you are dependent on any of these, as sudden withdrawal can also prove to be risky.

Travelling Avoid all kinds of non-essential travels. Most Covid 19 positive cases are imported cases, which later spread to the communities. Avoid being exposed to the public transport system and public places to avoid any likelihood of exposure. In case you have to travel, make sure to cover your nose and mouth with a mask and carry an alcoholbased hand sanitizer, at all times. Remember to sanitize each time you touch a surface, as Covid 19 strain can stay on surfaces for a few hours to days. Use your non-dominant hand while accessing the doorknobs and handles, as these are frequently touched by many people.

## Supplements and immunity boosting foods

While all the above-mentioned tips will definitely help, the need of the hour is a quick boost to your immunity system to keep it fighting fit. If you're concerned whether you are getting the right amount of nutrients from your diet, consult with your doctor about a supplementation regimen to boost your immune system. Here are a few common supplements and superfoods that can help.

### Vitamin C

This particular vitamin is a crucial participant in the army of immunity. It helps prevent the common cold. It acts as a powerful antioxidant and protects against damage induced by oxidative stress. For severe infections, including sepsis and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), high dose intravenous vitamin C treatment has been shown to significantly improve symptoms in patients.

### Vitamin D

Vitamin D supplements have a mild protective effect against respiratory tract infections. Most people are deficient in Vitamin-D, so it's best to consult with a doctor about taking a Vitamin D supplement to boost immune response.

### Zinc

Zinc is a vital component to WBC (white blood corpuscles) which fights infections. Zinc deficiency often makes one more susceptible to flu, cold and other viral infections. It is advisable to take a zinc supplement, especially for older people.

### Elderberry

Elderberries are full of nutrients including minerals like phosphorus, potassium, iron, copper and vitamins, such as vitamin A, B, and C, proteins and dietary fibre.

Elderberries have antibacterial and antiviral qualities which help fight cold and influenza.

### Turmeric and Garlic

The bright yellow spice, Turmeric, contains a compound called curcumin, which boosts the immune function. Garlic has powerful anti-inflammatory and antiviral properties which enhances body immunity.

Apart from maintaining a healthy lifestyle and taking supplements, the Indian health ministry is also suggesting few organic and natural ways to practise as preventive measures to fight COVID-19. The Ministry of AYUSH has recommended the following self-care guidelines as preventive measures and to boost immunity with special reference to respiratory health. Drink warm water throughout the day.

Practice Meditation, Yogasana, and Pranayama.

Increase the intake of Turmeric, Cumin, Coriander and garlic.

Drink herbal tea or decoction of Holy basil, Cinnamon, Black pepper, Dry Ginger and Raisin.

Avoid sugar and replace it with jaggery if needed.

Apply Ghee (clarified butter), Sesame oil, or Coconut oil in both the nostrils to keep the nostrils clean.

Inhale steam with Mint leaves and Caraway seeds. While the battle against the Covid-19 pandemic is fought by our health care workers, we can do our bit by limiting our exposure to the virus by staying indoors, social distancing, eating healthy, hydrating and following basic hygiene protocol.