

Boost your immune system naturally

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MAINTAINING your immune health system is more important than ever during this pandemic crisis. Did you know there are ways to boost your immune system naturally? For instance a well-balanced diet, exercise or enough sleep could ensure your body gets the nutrients needed by your immune system. Website houstonmethodist.org has a few ways to boost your immune system below.



A well-balanced diet, exercise or enough sleep could ensure your body gets the nutrients needed by your immune system. Picture: CERINIC.COM

Maintain a healthy diet

As with most things in your body, a healthy diet is key to a strong immune system. This means making sure you eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, lean protein and healthy fats. In addition to providing your immune system the energy it needs, a healthy diet can help ensure you're getting sufficient amounts of the micronutrients that play a role in maintaining your immune system, including:

Vitamin B6, found in chicken, salmon, tuna, bananas, green vegetables and potatoes (with the skin)

Vitamin C, found in citrus fruit, including oranges and strawberries, as well as tomatoes, broccoli and spinach

Vitamin E, found in almonds, sunflower and safflower oil, sunflower seeds, peanut butter and spinach

Exercise regularly

Physical activity isn't just for building muscles and helping yourself de-stress — it's also an important part of being healthy and supporting a healthy immune system.

One way exercise may improve immune function is by boosting your overall circulation, making it easier for immune cells and other infection-fighting molecules to travel more easily throughout your body.

In fact, studies have shown that engaging in as little as 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous exercise every day helps stimulate your immune system. This means it's important to focus on staying active and getting regular exercise.

Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate

Water plays many important roles in your body, including supporting your immune system. A fluid in your circulatory system called lymph, which carries important infection-fighting immune cells around your body, is largely made up of water. Being dehydrated slows down the movement of lymph, sometimes leading to an impaired immune system. Even if you're not exercising or sweating, you're constantly losing water through your breath, as well as through your urine and bowel movements. To help support your immune system, be sure you're replacing the water you lose with water you can use — which starts with knowing how much water you really need.

Get plenty of sleep

Sleep certainly doesn't feel like an active process, but there are plenty of important activities happening in your body when you're not awake — even if you don't realise it. For instance, important infection-fighting molecules are created while you sleep.

Studies have shown that people who don't get enough quality sleep are more prone to getting sick after exposure to viruses, such as those that cause the common cold. To give your immune system the best chance to fight off infection and illness, it's important to know how much sleep you should be getting every night, as well as the steps to take if your sleep is suffering.

Minimise stress

Whether it comes on quick or builds over time, it's important to understand how stress affects your health — including the impact it has on your immune system. During a period of stress, particularly chronic stress that's frequent and long-lasting, your body responds by initiating a stress response. This stress response, in turn, suppresses your immune system — increasing your chance of illness.

Stress is different for everyone, and how we relieve it is, too. Given the effect it can have on your health, it's important to know how to identify stress. And, whether it's deep breathing, meditation, prayer or exercise, you should also get familiar with the activities that help you reduce stress.