- Virus

Post COVID-19: Re-booting your immune system

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Good nutrition is the pillar of good health. This is because what we eat is what repairs, grows and regenerates our body. Feeding our body with a balanced diet allows it to fight off some common disorders, often referred to as lifestyle disorders or non-communicable diseases that could be avertible or reversible with some changes to the daily diet.

When the body is infected with the Coronavirus it is weakened as with any infection. The body's immune system responds by attacking the foreign virus or bacteria. While we mainly focus on recovery from COVID-19, the post recovery period is as important.

Those in this phase need to replenish their energy stores to regain stamina. Including healthy carbs in the diet will provide the necessary energy to carry out dayto-day functions and will replenish energy stores.

Rebuilding the immune system is also very important. A person in recovery requires proteins and micronutrients (Vitamins and Minerals) for the process of healing and to strengthen their immune system once more.

Consume protein at every meal

Protein is the main building block of all cells of the body, and plays an important role in building up the immune system. Dietary requirement is the amount of protein that must be supplied in the diet to satisfy the metabolic demand of the body. The metabolic demand is determined by the extent of the pathways that consume protein (amino acids). A person recovering from an infection has a higher metabolic demand than a healthy human being. While proteins are important for the dayto-day functioning of any normal healthy person, someone recovering from an infection would require an additional boost. Being deficient in protein can be a reason for poor immune function.

Approximately 10 – 15% of the daily energy requirement should come from protein. This would translate to consuming a source of protein at each of the three main meals. Choose protein-rich meals that include poultry, eggs, fish, pulses and legumes.

Fruits and vegetables

Fresh fruits and vegetables are essential for building up the immune system. Consuming fruits and vegetables in the daily diet will provide the body with all the vitamins and minerals it needs.

Hydration

Hydrating your body is essential as every cell, tissue, and organ in our body needs water to work properly. Consuming water-based liquids allows the body to flush out toxins. Post COVID-19, the body becomes extremely fatigued; therefore you must make sure there is sufficient fluid in the body so that the nutrients are carried to the cells, muscles and other tissues. Fluids are also essential for the endocrine balance and ensuring heart health and keeping the blood pressure normal. A parched throat may be comforted by sipping on warm liquids throughout the day.

What to avoid

Avoid deep-fried and sugar dense items as well as processed food items as they only give a temporary high but provide a very limited amount of nutrients to the body. It is also very important not to follow any fad diets post-COVID-19, as your body needs ample time to recover and you should not starve the body of any vital food groups. Avoid skipping meals, and binge-eating.

The road to recovery may vary from person to person, but is nevertheless achievable through a healthy diet and rest.