



# BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

A healthy immune system can prevent germs from entering the body and limits the harm if the body is exposed. During the flu season or times of illness, people often seek foods or vitamins to boost their immunity. A balanced eating pattern combined with healthy lifestyle factors are effective ways for the body to fight infection and disease. Eating enough nutrients are critical for both the growth and function of immune cells.<sup>1</sup> These nutrients include:

## Vitamin B6:

Vitamin B6 has been found to support immune function and has been widely studied for its role in preventing disease. Fortified breakfast cereals, enriched soy milk and dairy, eggs and poultry are high in vitamin B6.<sup>2</sup>

## Vitamin C:

Vitamin C plays a role in controlling infections and healing wounds. Citrus fruits, strawberries, tomatoes and bell peppers are high in vitamin C.<sup>3</sup>



## Vitamin D:

Vitamin D can help control infections and reduce inflammation. Fortified orange juice, dairy and fortified plant-based milk, salmon and egg yolk are high in vitamin D.<sup>4</sup> Other foods can be fortified with vitamin D, which can be found by checking the nutrition facts label.

## Vitamin E:

Vitamin E reduces the production of free radicals that can damage cells, and enhances immune function and prevents chronic diseases. Almonds, asparagus, mangos and avocados are high in vitamin E.<sup>5</sup>



## Zinc:

Zinc supports the growth and normal functioning of immune cells. Whole grains, legumes, tofu and poultry are high in zinc.<sup>6,7</sup>

## HEALTHY HABITS THAT BOOST THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

You can improve your immune system with the following<sup>1</sup>:

- Healthy eating habits
- Regular physical activity
- Stress management
- Adequate sleep
- Good hygiene

## TIPS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

You can improve your immune system with the following<sup>1</sup>:

- Find healthy strategies to manage stress, whether it's exercise, mindfulness, meditation or a hobby.
- Good hygiene and handwashing help prevent the spread of germs. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Aim for seven or more hours of sleep per night.

### Sources:

1. [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Nutrition and Immunity](#)
2. [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Vitamin B6](#)
3. [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Vitamin C](#)
4. [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Vitamin D](#)
5. [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Vitamin E](#)
6. [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Zinc](#)
7. [American Heart Association, The Skinny on FatsAcademy of Nutrition and Dietetics, How to Keep Your Immune System Healthy](#)