

Prepping For the Battle

Cold and flu season are on the way. The heavy time of year for these viruses are between Halloween and Easter. Getting prepared and in shape before they hit will be your ticket to health for the next few months. Here are a few tips for preventing colds and flu:

Get Your Blood Glucose in Control

High blood glucose levels effect your immune system and can make you more susceptible to catching a cold or flu virus. In addition, illness can make it harder to control your blood sugar.

1

Get a Flu Shot

2

Influenza is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently. Millions of people get the flu every year, hundreds of thousands of people are hospitalized and thousands or tens of thousands of people die from flu-related causes every year. An annual seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to help protect against flu. Vaccination has been shown to have many benefits including reducing the risk of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and even the risk of flu-related death.

Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination. These antibodies provide protection against infection with the viruses that are in the vaccine.

Get a pneumonia Shot

3

The CDC recommends vaccination with the pneumococcal vaccine if you have diabetes. The flu is a common cause of pneumonia, so preventing the flu is a good way to prevent pneumonia.



Wash Your Hands

Hand washing is still one of the best ways to lower your chances of getting a cold or the flu. But you have to do it right: Rub your hands together with soap for at least 20 seconds before you rinse -- don't forget the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. When you can't get to a sink, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

4

Keep Your Fingers Out of Your Mouth

We naturally have a lot of germs in our mouth. Never put your finger in your mouth after testing your blood glucose, simply apply light pressure with a gauze or cotton ball.

6



Keep Your Hands Off

Touching your nose, picking your nose or touching your eyes can make you sick. Those are the most common places for germs to get in.

5

Don't Bite Your Nails

Germs get under your nails and biting your nails is a fast way for germs to enter.

7

Jump Start Your Immune System

✓ Eat for Your Immune System

Eating plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit supports your immune system. The nutrients that are in vegetables and fruit are essential to good immune function. The fiber in vegetables and fruit nourishes your good gut bacteria (probiotics). Including foods that contain probiotics can help build a healthy immune system. Please see the attached list and start including these power foods.

✓ Exercise

Working out regularly enhances immune function.

✓ Stop Smoking

Smoking increases the risk of infections by making structural changes in the respiratory tract and decreasing immune response. Smoking also destroys cilia, the little hair like fibers inside our noses, this can increase infection risks.

✓ Sleep Right

Sleep deprivation has an adverse effect on immune function, and chronic sleep loss can increase an individual's vulnerability to infectious diseases.

14 Power Foods

Feeding your body certain foods may help keep your immune system strong. If you're looking for ways to prevent winter colds and the flu, your first step should be a visit to the grocery store. We know you can't eat all of these everyday but you can plan your meals to include these powerful immune boosters.

1. Citrus fruits

Most people turn to vitamin C after they've caught a cold. That's because it helps build up your immune system. Vitamin C is thought to increase the production of white blood cells. These are key to fighting infections.

Popular citrus fruits include:

- oranges
- limes
- tangerines
- clementine's
- lemons

Because your body doesn't produce or store it, you need daily vitamin C for continued health. Almost all citrus fruits are high in vitamin C. With such a variety to choose from, it's easy to add a squeeze of this vitamin to any meal.

2. Broccoli

Broccoli is supercharged with vitamins and minerals. Packed with vitamins A, C, and E, as well as many other antioxidants and fiber, broccoli is one of the healthiest vegetables you can put on your table. The key to keeping its power intact is to cook it as little as possible — or better yet, not at all. According to a study of mice, eating cruciferous vegetables sends a chemical signal to the body that boosts specific cell-surface proteins necessary for efficient immune-system function. In this study, healthy mice deprived of green vegetables lost 70 to 80 percent of cell-surface proteins.

Cruciferous vegetables include:

- arugula
- turnips
- bok choy
- radish
- broccoli
- kale
- Brussels sprouts
- cabbage
- cauliflower

Cruciferous vegetables are low-calorie, and rich in folate, vitamins C, E, and K, and fiber. Fiber is an important nutrient to incorporate if weight loss is the goal, as it helps keep you fuller longer.

3. Garlic

Garlic is found in almost every cuisine in the world. It adds a little zing to food and it's a must-have for your health. Early civilizations recognized its value in fighting infections. According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, garlic may also help lower blood pressure and slow down hardening of the arteries. Garlic's immune-boosting properties seem to come from a heavy concentration of sulfur-containing compounds, such as allicin.

4. Ginger

Ginger is another ingredient many turn to after getting sick. Ginger may help decrease inflammation, which can help reduce a sore throat and other inflammatory illnesses. Ginger may also help decrease nausea. While it's used in many sweet desserts, ginger packs some heat in the form of gingerol, a relative of capsaicin. Ginger may help decrease chronic pain and may possess cholesterol-lowering properties, according to recent animal research.

5. Spinach

Spinach is rich in vitamin C. It's also packed with numerous antioxidants and beta carotene, which may increase the infection-fighting ability of our immune systems. Similar to broccoli, spinach is healthiest when it's cooked as little as possible so that it retains its nutrients. However, light cooking enhances its vitamin A and allows other nutrients to be released from oxalic acid.

6. Probiotic Foods: Yogurt Kefir Sauerkraut Tempeh Kimchi Miso Kombucha

Probiotic foods are foods that contain live microbial cultures that have been shown to offer health benefits. These helpful bacteria can be found in cultured dairy foods like yogurt, fermented vegetables like kimchi and raw sauerkraut, nutrition bars, and other foods that have been fortified with probiotics. But foods are not the only sources; probiotics can also be found in dietary supplements.

When looking for yogurts make sure they have "live and active cultures" printed on the label. These cultures may stimulate your immune system to help fight diseases. Try to get plain yogurts rather than the kinds that are pre-flavored and loaded with sugar. You can sweeten plain yogurt yourself with healthy fruits instead-like berries.

Yogurt can also be a great source of vitamin D, so try to select brands fortified with vitamin D. Vitamin D helps regulate the immune system and is thought to boost our body's natural defenses against diseases.

7. Almonds

When it comes to preventing and fighting off colds, vitamin E tends to take a backseat to vitamin C. However, Vitamin E is key to a healthy immune system. It's a fat soluble, meaning it requires the presence of fat to be absorbed properly. Nuts, such as almonds, are packed with the vitamin and also have healthy fats. A half-cup serving, which is about 46 whole, shelled almonds, provides nearly 100 percent of the recommended daily amount of vitamin E.

8. Berries

Berries are a great source of vitamin C which is thought to help prevent damage to your cells and also protects the immune system against deficiencies. Dark berries like blackberries, strawberries and blueberries not only taste great but they are also a great source of flavanols which are highly effective antioxidants. Try to take a mix of berries rather than just taking one or two, as combining them can often give your body the best boost.

9. Green Tea

For centuries, green tea has been associated with good health. Green tea's health benefits may be due to its high level of antioxidants, called flavonoids.

According to a study published in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition, several fresh-brewed cups a day can lead to potential health benefits. These include lower blood pressure and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.

10. Papaya

Papaya is another fruit loaded with vitamin C. You can find 224 percent of the daily recommended amount of vitamin C in a single papaya. Papayas also have a digestive enzyme called papain that has anti-inflammatory effects.

Papayas have decent amounts of potassium, B vitamins, and folate, all of which are beneficial to your overall health.

11. Kiwi

Like papayas, kiwi are naturally full of a ton of essential nutrients, including folate, potassium, vitamin K, and vitamin C. Vitamin C boosts white blood cells to fight infection, while kiwi's other nutrients keep the rest of your body functioning properly.

12. Bone Broth

Bone broth helps heal the gut. Remember that about 80 % of all immune system cells reside in the digestive system. This means that as you heal your gut, you are also healing your immune system.

13. Onions

Onions are filled with immune-boosting nutrients like selenium, sulfur compounds, zinc, and vitamin C. Plus, they're one of the best sources of quercetin, a potent flavonoid and antioxidant that has antiviral properties as well as histamine regulating effects—in fact, you can think of quercetin as a "natural antihistamine." For your heart, onions provide a myriad of benefits. They contain quercetin which helps to prevent the oxidation of LDL cholesterol, promote relaxation of vascular smooth muscle, prevent clot formation, and even help to lower blood sugar.

14. Mushrooms

Mushrooms also contain incredibly powerful compounds that can bolster your health and balance your immune system. These compounds fight inflammation, destroy infectious microbes, slow down aging, and even help regenerate nerve cells. Mushrooms are one of the best ways to give our immune system a helping hand.

All Vegetables and Fruits Benefit Immune Function!

Chicken & Spinach Soup with Fresh Pesto



Serving size: about 1½ cups
Per serving: 226 calories; 9 g fat(2 g sat); 6 g fiber; 18 g carbohydrates;
19 g protein, 28 mg cholesterol; 211 mg sodium; 525 mg potassium
Carbohydrate Servings: 1
Exchanges: 1 starch, 1 vegetable, 2 lean meat, 1 fat

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/2 cup carrot or diced red bell pepper
- 1 large boneless, skinless chicken breast (about 8 ounces), cut into quarters
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- 6 ounces baby spinach, coarsely chopped
- 15-ounce can cannellini beans or great northern beans, rinsed
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/3 cup lightly packed fresh basil leaves
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 3/4 cup plain or herbed multigrain croutons for garnish (optional)
- 5 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1½ teaspoons dried marjoram

Preparation

1. Heat 2 teaspoons oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add carrot (or bell pepper) and chicken; cook, turning the chicken and stirring frequently, until the chicken begins to brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute more. Stir in broth and marjoram; bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is cooked through, about 5 minutes.

2. With a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken pieces to a clean cutting board to cool. Add spinach and beans to the pot and bring to a gentle boil. Cook for 5 minutes to blend the flavors.

3. Combine the remaining 1 tablespoon oil, Parmesan and basil in a food processor (a mini processor works well). Process until a coarse paste forms, adding a little water and scraping down the sides as necessary.

4. Cut the chicken into bite-size pieces. Stir the chicken and pesto into the pot. Season with pepper. Heat until hot. Garnish with croutons, if desired.