

Supercharge Your Immunity

Boosting your immune system during the winter months does not require a total lifestyle overhaul. A few simple changes are all it takes to stay healthy this season.



1. Eat well to feel well

Bolster your inner defences by eating foods with antiviral and antibacterial properties, such as warming spices, onions and garlic. The latter can halve your risk of a cold, as well as reduce inflammation. A home-made chicken soup is a well-known food remedy with scientific backing. Oily fish is a great virus-zapping food. Oysters and pumpkin seeds are rich in zinc – a potent immunity-boosting nutrient. Snack on seasonal fruits to increase your vitamin and mineral intake.

2. Avoid immunity robbers

All stimulants – alcohol, coffee, tea, colas, Red Bull and sugar – lower your immunity, and thus increase your susceptibility to infections. Sugar is the biggest immunity suppressor. Just 100gms of sugar a day (approximately two cans of soda) can reduce the ability of the white blood cells to kill germs by a staggering 40 per cent. Avoid processed foods as they rob the body of nutrients, and cut out dairy products as they are mucus forming.

3. Enjoy herbal drinks

Herbal teas are a great way to replace stimulants. My absolute favourite is Cat's Claw tea with cardamom, orange peel, ginger and cinnamon. Sage tea is wonderfully soothing to a sore throat, whilst thyme and rosemary tea help ease respiratory congestion.

4. Look after your gut

A healthy digestive system is critical to your overall immunity, because 80 per cent of your immune system is located there. Your good gut bacteria help prevent pathogenic overgrowth of microbes and bacteria, reduce inflammation and increase antibody production. This is why taking a good probiotic formula as prevention, and especially following a course of antibiotics is vital to strong immunity. Try Biocare Bio Acidophilus Forte Plus (www.biocare.co.uk) –



the most potent probiotic on the market.

5. Use the best supplements

Nothing beats Comvita's Winter Wellness range (www.comvita.co.uk). Try Olive Leaf Complex as soon as the symptoms start, or better still take a low dose throughout winter to ward off winter illnesses. You can nip your kid's cold in the bud with Children's Olive Leaf Complex berry flavour, or soothe their sore throat with delicious Lemon & Honey Lollipops. My favourite adult throat remedies include Propolis Aniseed Lozenges and Propolis Throat Spray. Note: Always consult your doctor before taking any supplements.

6. Take time to recuperate

Avoid going to work or doing strenuous jobs if you have a bad cold. This will only make it last longer. You can also pass it on to your colleagues and get the whole office out of action. A cold is your body's cry for rest and TLC. So take time to recover!

7. Take care of your body

Exercise is an effective immune booster. But in excess, it will suppress your immune system. This is a perfect time to opt for a gentler and balancing form of activity such as yoga or pilates.

8. De-stress daily

When you are stressed, your immune system is weakened and you are more susceptible to colds and infections. Prolonged stress can slow down recovery. Laughter is the best antidote to stress and the best medicine! Watch funny

movies and read jokes.

9. Balance your emotions

According to research, even five minutes of anger can suppress the immune system for several hours. Conversely, happiness boosts immunity and enhances healing. Practise deep breathing and meditation to balance your mind, body and spirit.

10. Get enough sleep to heal

Even a single night's sleep loss can significantly lower the immune system. However, when you get enough sleep, the immune system is reinforced and replenished. Sleep restores your energy levels and heals the body better than any medicine! □

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