



Boost Your Immune System Naturally

(Dodge getting sick this season, and create a healthier body in the process)

Karla Koch, ND, DOM, RN

Lifestyle:

- Decrease stress, both physical and psycho-social. Stress hormones inhibit the immune system.
- **Exercise:** at least 3 times a week, moderate exercise is best, excess work-outs without sufficient recovery are a drain. Really beneficial work-outs for the immune system include the ones that are meditative and improve blood and lymphatic flow like yoga and tai chi and rebounding.
- **Calm your nerves:** meditation, counseling, increased social connections.
- Stop or decrease alcohol intake. Besides the commonly known toxic effects of alcohol on the body, it also acts like a simple sugar, which is an immune depressant.
- Stop or decrease smoking.
- Ensure the best possible quality of **sleep**, and make time for it!

Diet: A healthy diet will decrease the amount of physiological stress on your body.

Primary pointers for the immune system:

1. Shop the perimeter of the grocery store (choose **whole foods**, or as minimally processed as possible).
2. **Cut out sugar**, chemical sweeteners, and especially high fructose corn syrup. They suppress the immune system directly and quickly. If sweeteners are needed, choose agave nectar, honey, maple syrup, or the herb stevia, which has no sugar or known negative effects on the body. For gum, choose brands that use Xylitol.
3. Cut down on coffee and all sodas.
4. Eat **probiotic** rich foods (yogurt, miso soup, kombucha tea, sauerkraut) for a healthier gut, and greater resistance to opportunistic bugs.
5. Drink **more water** and tea (caffeinated teas only until early afternoon).
6. Choose **organic** over conventional foods, especially meat and dairy, and more 'super foods.'

Super foods:

- Brightly colored fruits and vegetables
- Garlic and onions
- Ginger
- Parsley
- Turmeric
- Wheat grass juiced
- Beets and beet greens
- Elderberry
- Dark leafy greens (kale, collards, chard, broccoli, beet greens, spinach)
- Orange veggies (see beta carotene rich foods)
- Mushrooms (maitake, reishi, shitake)

Supplements:

- Vitamin A (or beta-carotene) – **carrot juice**, liver, spirulina, dandelion leaf, Cod liver oil, burdock, Beta-carotene (mixed carotenoids) rich foods: carrots, broccoli, tomatoes, pumpkin, leafy greens, sweet potato, mango, papaya, apricots.
- Vitamin E - raw nuts and seeds, vegetable oils, mayonnaise, sweet potato
- Vitamin C – **acerola berries**, orange juice, guava, peppers, melons, citrus fruits, papaya, kiwi, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli, mango
- Vitamin B6 – **100% bran cereal**, pork loin, watermelon, banana, fish, avocado, chicken, turkey, tomato juice, sunflower seeds, granola, soybeans, broccoli, brown rice, crab
- Vitamin B12 – **beef liver**, clams, salmon, lamb, lobster, beef, tuna, cheese, milk, halibut, egg
- Multivitamin - high quality
- Vitamin D3 – **sunlight** exposure (15 minutes daily to face and arms), fish and fish oil, especially **sardines, cod liver oil, mackerel**, herring, mushrooms (morel, shitake, chanterelle), pork, egg yolk, fortified foods (milk and non-dairy milks), most commercial cereals
- Zinc – **oysters** (eastern), beef, wheat germ, turkey dark meat, cheese, chard, lima beans, potato, oats, mustard greens, pumpkin seeds, soybeans, tuna, brown rice or enriched white, ginger, peas rice
- Protein – especially the amino acids Glutamine, Arginine, Lysine

Beneficial side effects of following this immune boosting advice:

- improve overall health and well-being
- increase energy
- detoxify body
- lost weight without trying
- increase mental alertness
- improve digestion
- slow aging
- delay, slow, or avoid chronic diseases

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Naturopathic and Oriental Medicine

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