
Immune Boosting Nutrition



The cold and flu season is upon us, and it is important to protect our bodies in the best way we can. The immune system changes as we age, and we may become more susceptible to disease. Every part of our body, including our immune system, benefits from living a healthy lifestyle. Exercising regularly, balanced nutrition and maintaining a healthy weight have all been shown to have positive effects on our immunity.

Good nutrition is a crucial part of supporting our body's immune system. It is important to have a well-balanced diet that includes a variety of foods such as lean proteins, vegetables, whole grains, fruit and dairy. Certain nutrients can help boost our immunity, support our body's defense mechanism and protect against infections.

Protein is an essential part of our body and is important for our body's defense mechanism. Protein forms important structures in the body such as our bones, muscles, skin and hair. It also helps to regulate many body functions and fuels our cells. Aim to incorporate a variety of proteins such as lean meats, poultry, seafood, beans, peas, nuts, seeds and eggs.

Vitamin A helps control the body's immune system and protects against infections. Vitamin A supports the health of skin and tissues in the mouth, stomach, intestines and respiratory system. Vitamin A can be found in sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, sweet peppers, broccoli and apricots. You will also find foods that are vitamin A fortified such as milk and breakfast cereal.

Vitamin C helps protect the body against infection by promoting the growth of antibodies. Antibodies help our body fight against bacteria and viruses. Foods high in vitamin C include citrus fruits such as oranges, grapefruit and tangerines, as well as red bell peppers, broccoli and strawberries. You will also find some foods that are fortified with vitamin C such as certain juices.

Vitamin E works naturally as an antioxidant in the body by working to reduce free radicals. Foods high in Vitamin E include fortified cereals, sunflower seeds, almonds, hazelnuts and peanut butter. Vitamin E is a water-soluble vitamin, meaning that the body will store what it does not immediately need to use later on.

Zinc promotes wound healing and may boost the immune system. More than 300 enzymes in the body require zinc for protein metabolism, insulin control and preventing oxidative damage to our cells. Foods high in zinc include fortified cereals, beef, some seafood and poultry.

Phytochemicals are naturally occurring chemicals found in plants that have many health benefits. Phytochemicals work as an antioxidant, protecting the body against free radicals, inflammation and boosting the immune system. There are several types of phytochemicals that can be found in a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains and beans. Choose brightly colored fruits and vegetables, which often have the best sources of phytochemicals.

The immune system changes as we age, and we may become more susceptible to diseases. Incorporating a variety of foods in our diet and focusing on balanced nutrition can help support our body's immune and defense system. Although we can't shield our body from everything, we can take certain steps to ensure that we are supporting our immune system the best we can.

Strawberry Spinach Green Smoothie

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 very ripe bananas, peeled, diced and frozen
- 6 oz. strawberries, hulled (about 9 medium)
- 2 mandarin oranges, peeled and halved
- 3 cups packed baby spinach
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 cup ice

Instructions

1. Add bananas, strawberries, oranges, spinach, water, and half of the ice to a blender.
2. Blend until combined then add remaining ice and blend until smoothie is well pureed. Serve immediately.



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