
Importance of Improving the Immune System in the Current Time of Coronavirus Pandemics

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected the world adversely. Thousands of people are being infected daily by the rapidly spreading virus. Now people are considering taking magical steps to improve their immunity and stay healthy. Preventive strategies such as avoiding contact with sick individuals, good hygiene, and washing hands frequently, eating a healthy diet are the only measures to reduce the risk of this deadly virus.

Healthy Lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle is the first line of defense against coronavirus. General healthy habits, such as proper nutrition, help the body to strengthen the immune system naturally. According to Dr. Yufang Lin, 80% of our immune system is present in our gut that helps us to fight infectious bacteria and viruses. If our digestive system is not healthy, it makes our immune system weaker, and our body becomes more susceptible to fighting off pathogens.

Following healthy living strategies can be adopted to protect the body from environmental assaults:

- Avoid smoking
- Exercise regularly
- Proper healthy nutrition
- Get adequate sleep

- Avoid alcohol
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Minimize your stress
- Avoid getting an infection, wash your hands frequently

Role of Healthy Nutrition to Boost Immune System

Balanced Diet

A healthy diet containing fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats, present in foods, including olive oil, fatty fish, and nuts is essential to stimulate the immune system. Such foods are rich in zinc, vitamin C, and other antioxidants, help to reduce inflammation and fight pathogens. Adults and children are more susceptible to infection due to a weak immune system. According to a scientific study published in the journal *Frontiers in Physiology*, a healthy diet with regular 400 IU vitamin D supplement increases the number of disease-fighting cells such as T cells.

Certain foods affect our immune system adversely, such as processed and fried foods. Healthcare professionals suggest eating a whole food diet, including fermented foods, such as sauerkraut, yogurt, kefir, and miso in a regular diet. Such foods help to enhance the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut and support the immune system to fight infection.

Plant-based Diet

A low-fat and plant-based diet helps to boost the immune system. The immune system depends on the activity of white blood cells that synthesize antibodies to fight

viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens. Fresh fruits and green vegetables help us to intake a high number of vitamins that support white blood cells.

Studies have shown that the intake of a low-fat diet is proactive and aids to strengthen immune defenses. A high-fat diet may impair the function of white blood cells, and oils may alter the microbiota in our gut that helps in immunity. Similarly, maintaining a healthy weight improves the immune system. Obesity is linked with a high risk of viral infections, including pneumonia. For weight loss, a plant-based diet is very beneficial because it is rich in fibers, which aids fill you up, without increasing extra calories. Fiber may also decrease BMI, which is associated with improved immunity.

Be strategic about supplements

There is no such herb or vitamin available on the planet that can automatically prevent a viral infection. But a balanced supply of various vitamins and minerals play a vital role to boost up the immune system. According to scientific research published in the British Medical Journal, claim that a moderate daily supply of vitamin D protects the body from various types of viruses and bacteria. If an individual has a normal range of vitamin D in his body, then a daily supplement of about 600 to 800 IU is enough.

Natural Immune System Boosters

Certain foods help the body to strengthen its immune system. This immune system fights the infection and prevents various viral and bacterial infections. Following immune system booster foods should be included in your daily diet.

1. Citrus fruits

Citrus fruits provide vitamin C to the body. It helps to enhance the growth of white blood cells in the body. These cells are key to fight viruses.

Some famous citrus foods include:

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

Our body can't produce or store vitamin C. Therefore, the daily supply of vitamin C is essential to maintain good health.

2. Broccoli

Broccoli is packed with minerals and vitamins. Supercharged with vitamins C, E, and A and various other fibers and antioxidants, it is one of the most nutritious food.

3. Garlic

Garlic is popular worldwide and can be found in almost every cuisine. It has been used as herbal medicine in ancient times, and ever civilization recognizes its value against infections. Scientific studies have shown that garlic helps to reduce blood pressure and slow down the thickening of the arteries. It contains a high concentration of sulfur-containing compounds like allicin that give it immune-boosting properties.

4. Ginger

Ginger is another immune-boosting ingredient. It helps to reduce inflammation, which ultimately relieves a sore throat and other inflammatory

disorders. It also helps to reduce nausea. Ginger is used in several sweet desserts. It possesses cholesterol-lowering properties and reduces chronic pain.

5. Yogurt

Yogurt has alive and active cultures of beneficial bacteria that stimulate the immune system and helps to fight infection. It is also a rich source of vitamin D that is considered a key vitamin to strengthen immunity and boost the body's natural defenses against viruses.

6. Almonds

When we talk about fighting and preventing viral infections, vitamin E is equally important as vitamin C. Vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin that needs fat to be absorbed. It plays a key role in maintaining a healthy immune system. Nuts, including almonds, are supercharged with this vitamin and have healthy fats. A daily dose of about 46 whole, shelled almonds are recommended to get enough amount of vitamin E.

Variety is the key to balanced nutrition. There is no single food that can stimulate our immunity and fight the infection. Always pay attention to suggested daily intake to avoid toxicity or deficiency of vitamins.