

# HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time

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## Immune System: Your Natural Protection Against Invaders



The **immune system** is a complex network of cells and proteins that defends the body against disease, infections and helps recovery after an injury.

The immune system is a complex fighting system powered by five liters of blood and lymph. Lymph is a clear and colorless liquid that passes throughout the tissues of the body. Together, these two fluids transport all the elements of the immune system so they can do their jobs.

White blood cells are there to launch a defense. There are two different types of white blood cells: phagocytes and lymphocytes that help destroy invading organisms.

Having a fever and inflammation can be unpleasant, but they're signs that your body is doing its job. Fever releases white blood cells, increases metabolism, and stops certain organisms from multiplying.

Inflammation occurs when each damaged cell releases histamines. The histamines cause the cell walls to dilate. This creates the redness, heat, pain, and swelling of inflammation. As a result, your body limits the effects of the irritant.

There are ways to **strengthen the immune system naturally**, whether or not you have pre-existing conditions that make you more vulnerable to diseases.

Although there are aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic which are out of our control, **there are significant impacts we can make on our immune system that are in our control.** Since it will be some time until we have a vaccine for COVID-19, now is the time to strengthen your immune system, so that if you do end up contracting the virus, your body will be ready to fight!

There are various ways to aid your natural immune system, including:

- Getting adequate sleep quality and quantity
- Managing health conditions
- Eating the proper nutrition
- Achieving adequate physical activity
- Managing stress/anxiety
- Forming and maintaining healthy relationships
- Getting adequate sunshine exposure
- Enjoying laughter



Take care of your body and it will take care of you!



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## SUPPORT YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM WITH GREAT NUTRITION

Boost your immune response by consuming the vitamins and minerals your body needs.

Deficiencies in zinc, selenium, iron, copper, folic acid, and vitamins A, B6, C, D, and E can alter immune responses. These nutrients help the immune system in several ways: working as an antioxidant to protect healthy cells, supporting growth and activity of immune cells, and producing antibodies. Epidemiological studies find that those who are poorly nourished are at greater risk of bacterial, viral, and other infections.

Here is a list of just some of the foods you can consume **TODAY** to help your immune response.

- **Sweet Potatoes** for Vitamin A.



- **Spinach** for Vitamin C, E, folate (folic acid).



- **Almonds** for Vitamin E, iron and protein.



- **Citrus Fruits** for Vitamin C.



- **Broccoli** for Vitamin C, A, E, zinc and selenium.



*Eat Well To Be Well.*

