

INCREASE YOUR IMMUNITY

5 Steps to Avoid a Cold or The Flu



Introduction

Your immune system is your number one defense mechanism against intruders such as bacteria or viruses that can make you very ill. It is imperative to make sure that you stay healthy throughout the year and put all the chances on your side to boost your immune system. To do so, here are five steps to help you avoid being sick with a cold or flu.

Step 1 - Eating Well

Eating well means getting many fruits and vegetables in your system and stay hydrated. Enough that you get many nutrients and antioxidants to help strengthen your immune system. You will specifically want to keep on top of your selenium, vitamin E, and vitamin C intake. Selenium is found in nuts (like Brazil nuts) or fish. As for vitamin E, you can get it in spinach, seeds, and peanuts. Vitamin C can be found in many vegetables like broccoli, spinach, cauliflower, or sweet potatoes. As for water, drinking plenty of it will help your body flush the toxins like bacteria that could cause sickness.

Here are some ideas for your grocery list:

Fish

Fish and, more specifically, tuna is an excellent source of selenium. One ounce of tuna can provide around 30 mcg of selenium. Selenium is a powerful antioxidant and is one of the essential minerals for our health and immunity. The daily intake recommendation is 55 micrograms of selenium for an adult. Other fish and seafood are usually between 12 mcg and 20 mcg of selenium per ounce. Salmon is also an excellent choice to help the immune system. It contains a lot of “healthy fat” (omega-3), which is known to strengthen the immune system and reduce the risks of heart disease.

Lentils

If you eat a vegan or vegetarian diet, lentils are a great substitute to fish. One cup of lentils can provide around 6 mcg of selenium. They are also a good source of immune-boosting nutrients, fiber, and protein.

Garlic

Another vegetable that has a similar effect on our immune system as zinc is garlic. Garlic has the ability, according to some research, to keep a cold at bay. Some studies even demonstrate that individuals who were living with cancer were able to boost their immune system by increasing their intake of garlic.

Blueberries

Berries, in general, are packed with antioxidants. Blueberries are at the top of all the fruits and vegetables for the number of antioxidants it contains. Not only does research show the power of blueberries on our immune system, and linked to a lower risk of stomach fat, cholesterol, heart diseases, and cancer.

Sunflower Seeds

Sunflower seeds are very high in vitamin E. One ounce can provide 76% of your daily intake, which is 15 milligrams. Vitamin E is also a potent antioxidant like selenium, which help fight infection since it enhances the immune system.

A diet that is rich in vitamin E and vitamin C, zinc, and selenium are most likely going to help you boost your immunity. While it is great to eat as many healing foods, it is not always possible to provide all the nutrients and antioxidants that our body needs to stay healthy. That's when supplements become a great option.

Step 2 - Practice Good Hygiene

The number one trick to not get flu or a cold is to avoid its antigens by practicing good hygiene. That means to limit, as much as you can, your exposure to viruses or bacteria.

The goal of the virus is to find a host, a cell in the body. Our innate immune system is the first responder of our body, which includes our skin. Our skin, being the first line of defense, serves as a surface barrier to stop the virus or bacteria from getting into our body.

That is why, when we are in flu season, you see signs of washing your hands everywhere. By washing your hands, you destroy the antigen before it harms the body. You should wash your hands before every meal, after going to the bathroom or after touching someone else (like a handshake) or something in public. It is also essential to be conscious of when you reach for your face since the virus is more likely to enter through your mouth.

Step 3 - Stay Hydrated

Drinking plenty of fluids will help your body flush the toxins that could cause sickness. 75% of people are dehydrated consistently, and that's probably one of the main reasons why most of us get sick or don't recover fast from illnesses. Water is critical to flush any toxins from our body. If we don't have enough water, we can't get rid of the toxins fast enough. Toxins can be in the form of viruses or bacteria. Drinking plenty of water can fight off infection. You can start increasing your water consumption by always having a bottle with you that you can refill. It is recommended to get around 2 to 3 liters of water per day.

Step 4 – Implement a Bedtime Routine

To ensure that your immune system is functioning optimally, you need to make sure that you get adequate sleep. Since sleep is critical to our immune system, it is recommended to get between seven and eight hours of sleep per night. That number of hours is adequate and regenerate the body. Having plenty of sleep will increase the ability of the body's white cells to fight illnesses and reduce symptoms connected to the common cold and flu. To get a good rest, try to implement a bedtime routine that allows you to get your hours of sleep. Here are a few ideas to help you improve your sleep.

Create a Routine

It is proven that a routine will trick your body into falling asleep at a specific time. Try to observe yourself, is there a time when you are tired? If so, make sure you go to bed before that time. Create a routine that allows you to complete everything before that time and go to bed. You can also set an alarm that will tell you that it's time to prepare yourself for bedtime. That way, you are less likely to forget what time it is and be more successful at implementing a routine. A bedtime ritual is an excellent addition to your schedule. A good bedtime ritual is one that allows you to relax, disconnect from the stress of life, and slowly tell your body that it is time to shut down.

Set a Comfortable Atmosphere

It might be time to look at your bedroom and try to find ways to improve the atmosphere for a good night's sleep. Don't underestimate the comfort of your bed and pillow and the power of fresh linen. If you are uncomfortable, you will likely have a hard time falling asleep or staying asleep. Another aspect of comfort is the temperature of the room and the level of noise around. Try sleeping with a fan on or a white noise machine. Having a constant sound in

the room could help you maintain your sleep. If you like essential oils, try a drop of lavender on your pillow, this will help the brain relax.

Avoid This

Avoid any alcohol, cigarettes, caffeine, or a large meal from 2–3 hours before you go to bed.

Talk to an Expert

If you've tried all those recommendations and you are still struggling with sleep, it might be a good idea to consult your doctor or a sleep expert. There are other solutions that they can provide you to improve your sleep situation.

Step 5 – Manage Your Stress

Stress is a significant contributor to illnesses. One person out of three reports feeling very stressed in their daily life, which tends to put us at risk of activating harmful viruses that may be in our system. When we experience stress, we harm our body's ability to fight antigens with antibodies. Daily stress and stressful situations can be detrimental to our immune system. The more stress reduction activities you can bring in your life, the stronger your immune system will become. Here are two tips to help you reduce your stress and increase your immunity to viruses.

Change Your Mindset

You can change your mindset by being more positive and live in the present moment. According to studies across the world, positivism is a trait that increases your health and reduces your chances of being sick from a virus. Not only is the immune system of optimistic people more robust, but they also show signs of being healthier in general. Whatever happens around you, you always have a choice of how you respond to that situation. You either see it with half-full glass or half-empty glass. An excellent way to start improving your attitude is to focus on gratitude. Finding things that you are grateful for

will help you see the best in everything. You can do so by writing in a journal the daily gratitude that you want to express.

Practice Mindfulness

To manage your tensions, you can adopt a new perspective on life by adding a mindfulness practice. Mindfulness is the ability to stay in the present moment and stop worrying about the past or the future. Less mental stress also means less physical stress and give more power to your immune system. Try mindfulness breathing by taking three deep breaths.

- Breathing in through the nose
- Breathing out through the mouth
- Repeat two more times

Redo this mindfulness breathing a few times during your day to make it a total of 5 mindfulness breathing exercises.

Tap Into the Power of Aromas

Aromas from essential oils can help you boost your immune system while bringing a sense of calmness into space. One of the most effective essential oils is lavender. Lavender is a powerful oil in which antioxidants help the body protect the cells from toxins. You can use it in a diffuser to help kill allergen and bring a fresh scent to your home and help you relax. Place a drop of lavender oil on your pillow to improve your sleep. Another great way to use lavender oil is by adding two to four drops to your bathwater. Lavender oil will help you release the toxins from your body while finding a deep sense of relaxation.

Anyone can work at building their immune system and increase their chances of staying healthy during a flu season or when confronted with bacteria. As you have learned from this five steps guide, we stand more chances of fighting illness by eating certain foods and reduce the stress in our life. You also have the opportunity to improve your sleep, which will help the body fight infection.

As you will probably notice when you apply those five steps, you end up having more energy to do more of the things you love when you are healthier. Keeping your body healthy has many perks!

If you can, try to maintain this lifestyle throughout the year, as it will help you build a resilient immune system that can withstand antigens. Not only do you stand more chances of staying healthy, but it also helps you recover faster if you do find yourself ill.