

Strengthen the Immune System with these 12 Superfoods

Friday, March 20, 2020 by: [Divina Ramirez](#)



The immune system plays an important role in the [protection of the body against disease](#). When functioning properly, the immune system can identify bacteria, viruses and other pathogens, and distinguish these from the body's own cells.

However, the immune system may be compromised due to poor nutrition and overall health. A weak immune system can aggravate normally harmless ailments, such as the common cold, allergies and headaches. It also increases the risk of severe conditions, such as pneumonia, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

One way to super-charge the immune system is to consume immune-boosting foods. Many fruits and vegetables are excellent [sources of antioxidants](#) that aid the body's immune functions. Antioxidants also play important roles in various bodily functions including metabolism, respiration and digestion.

The following are [12 nutrient-dense foods](#) that can help fortify the immune system.

Garlic

Garlic contains plant compounds that have anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, such as allicin and alliin. It is a known remedy for toothaches, coughs, constipation and snake bites. Currently, it is also used to relieve the symptoms of cardiovascular and metabolic conditions, such as hypertension, atherosclerosis, coronary heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.

Ginger

Ginger is a popular natural remedy for stomach aches, nausea and diarrhea. It is widely considered a superfood due to the various minerals and vitamins it contains, such as potassium, copper, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, iron, niacin and vitamin C. It also contains bioactive components that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects against joint pain caused by osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and gout.

Blueberries

Blueberries are also excellent sources of antioxidants that strengthen the immune system. Blueberries also prevent cellular damage caused by free radicals.

(Related: [Studies look into the benefits of blueberries for heart disease, diabetes prevention.](#))

Citrus fruits

Many citrus fruits, such as oranges, lemons, grapefruits, tangerines and clementines, contain high amounts of vitamin C. This essential vitamin boosts the immune system by stimulating the production of white blood cells that fight off bacteria and viruses. Citrus fruits also contain antioxidants, such as flavonoids and beta carotene, which play important roles in immunity enhancement. Citrus fruits are also linked to a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and macular degeneration.

Spinach

[Spinach](#) is also an excellent source of vitamins A and C that fortify the immune system against infection and disease. It can also boost energy levels due to its high iron content.

Turmeric

Turmeric is a popular natural remedy for the common cold and the flu thanks to the compound known as curcumin. Turmeric is known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that boost immune responses.

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Almonds

[Almonds](#) also possess immune-boosting properties due to high amounts of vitamin E, a fat-soluble antioxidant. Not only does vitamin E promote healthy skin, but it also delays the onset of chronic diseases caused by free radicals including Type 2 diabetes, atherosclerosis, dementia and degenerative eye disease.

Fish

Fatty fish, such as salmon, tuna, herring, sardines and trout, contain high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 is essential to cardiovascular health because it is known to lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Broccoli

Broccoli is also rich in antioxidants, such as vitamins A, C and E, which prevent chronic and degenerative diseases. It also contains phytonutrients that relieve inflammation and reduce the risk of cancer.

Sunflower seeds

Sunflower seeds are an excellent source of vitamin E. As an antioxidant agent, vitamin E supports the immune system, promotes eye health and lowers the risk of coronary heart disease.

Red bell peppers

Brightly colored vegetables, such as red bell peppers and carrots, contain high amounts of beta carotene that boost immunity.

Dark chocolate

Dark chocolate is loaded with antioxidants that support cardiovascular health. It also contains minerals, such as iron, magnesium and zinc, that regulate blood pressure and immune responses.

[A strong immune system](#) is the body's first line of defense against disease-causing pathogens. Keep your immune system healthy by eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep and exercising regularly.

IMPORTANT: The following also build your immune system:

- ZINC
- Vitamin C (not ascorbic acid)
- Magnesium
- Elderberry
- Vitamin D (20 minutes of direct Sunlight)
- Adequate REM Sleep