



Wellness Buddy Tip

Chronic Disease Health Promotion and Education Program
Jackson County Health Department

Boost your Immune System By: Hannah O'Steen

The immune system has a huge role in your body. Its role is to protect the body from viruses, infection, bacteria, and the development of illness and disease.

To keep the immune system in good working condition three things must be met. These important parts are good nutrition, exercise, and stress management.

Water is also very important in a healthy immune system. Water transports many nutrients and oxygen to our body's cells.

Also a healthy lifestyle must be achieved. This includes not smoking, maintaining a healthy body weight, sleeping enough, and drinking moderate amounts of alcohol if you drink.

The most frequent



cause of a depressed immune system is a nutrient deficiency. To avoid a deficiency a healthy diet rich in natural foods is a must. Foods that make up a healthy diet include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, seeds, and nuts. Also an average but not excessive amount of protein should be consumed. Also a diet low in fat and refined sugars is important for promoting a

strong and healthy immune system.

It has been found that many Americans struggle to consume the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables per day. Also the nutritional content of these fruits and vegetables have declined due to modern farming practices. Also it is proclaimed that the body now contains 400 new toxins that didn't exist 45 years ago.

There are many components believed to help boost the immune system. These substances include beta carotene, vitamin C, Vitamin E, selenium, and zinc. These substances can be easily found in healthy diets that are based on the recommended food pyramid.

Immune System Boosters

- * Beta carotene— Converted in the body to vitamin A. Also is an antioxidant. Found in compounds produced by plants.
- * Vitamin C— stimulates the production of white blood cells and antibodies. May be found in both fruits and vegetables.
- * Vitamin E— Helps protect against many diseases. May be found in oils, and dark green leafy vegetables.
- * Selenium— Strengthens phagocytes which are the white blood cells that destroy foreign microorganisms. May be found in foods that are produced or grown in the soil.
- * Zinc— Helps fight against many infections. Most commonly known to fight against common colds. Zinc is often found in meat, liver, oysters, other seafood, eggs, legumes, soybeans, mushrooms, poultry and brewers yeast. These sources are not the only sources of zinc.

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Special points of interest:

- *The immune system protects the body from infections, viruses, bacteria, and disease.*
- *To obtain an optimal immune system you must have a healthy diet, exercise, manage stress and practice other healthy lifestyle behaviors.*
- *Beta carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E, selenium, and zinc may help boost the immune system.*



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