

## **Boost your Immune System for Flu Season**

It's that time of year again...the dreaded Flu Season!

We run outside or take our kids out without a jumper but with the temps lowering, we need to make sure we are properly dressed. A bit of a chill and a weak immune system are the perfect conditions for catching the flu. When you get a chill, your nose runs and tickles your throat causing irritation, then inflammation. A sore throat usually is the first sign of a cold or flu brewing.

### **How can we protect ourselves?**

Start now to boost your immune system that is designed to protect the body from germs, viruses and bacteria. If you go out, think about the people with the onset of the flu that have been out, too. Take antibacterial wipes with you to wipe down the trolley handles and seats. Perhaps wearing gloves to keep your hands free of encountering germs on door handles, pens, items in the shops that infected people have fondled. Always wash your hands as soon as you enter your home and especially before you eat.

### **How do we boost our immune system?**

One great way to keep your immune system in tip top shape is to eat a healthy diet. Here are some of the top immune boosting foods:

Whole fruit – Not juice. You need a healthy digestive system that requires plenty of fibre. Fibre is the prebiotic food for the beneficial bacteria in your gut that builds a strong immune system. The juice may have some vitamins, but it is full of sugar. Sugar weakens your immune system. Several portions of citrus, blueberries, strawberries, tomatoes, apples, pears and stone fruit are great for snacking. You can also blend the whole fruit and freeze them into popsicles to soothe a sore throat if you do get the flu.

Probiotic foods help build the friendly bacteria in your gut. Have a daily dose of fermented foods like probiotic sauerkraut, kim chi, coconut kefir, vinegar or Greek yoghurt. Make sure the yoghurt is plain and add your own fresh fruit as most store bought ones have added sugar. I make my own coconut yoghurt by mixing up some coconut milk and opening up a few probiotic capsules and mixing the probiotics into the coconut milk, cover with a cheesecloth and set for 48 hours. I do like to add some fresh vanilla bean for more yummy flavour. Then, mix and eat after refrigerating.

Wild caught salmon for Vitamin D and zinc.

Dark Chocolate (NEVER milk chocolate!) for antioxidants and magnesium.

Plenty of dark leafy greens to get a good dose of vitamins and chlorophyll like spinach, kale, silver beet and swiss chard.

Wide variety of veggies, especially root veggies that feed the friendly bacteria.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil for the anti-inflammatory properties.

Eggs are loaded with nutrition especially Vitamin D and protein.

Plenty of water to loosen trapped mucus and replenish the water you may lose through sweating. Make sure it is not tap water and toxins, fluoride and bacteria are filtered out. Adding lemon can give you an extra flavour and nutritional boost.

Teas like ginger, green tea, hibiscus, rooibos and dandelion root are some good choices. Ginseng is known for upper respiratory treatment.

Bone broths and chicken soup, just like Grandma used to make but make sure you keep the salt to a minimum.

### **What sort of supplements could I take?**

If you are a smoker or around smokers, suck on some sugarless Vitamin C lozenges.

Echinacea stimulates the immune system.

Elderberry is good to boost your immunity, especially in the first few days as it can shorten the length of colds and flu.

Colloidal Silver kills bacteria. Spray in your mouth and gargle to cool a sore throat and kill off some of the germs.

Probiotics are VERY important for your gut health and immunity.

Vitamin D, Ginger, Garlic, Oregano, Astragalus Root and Olive leaf have been mentioned as beneficial.

Myrrh essential oil in a diffuser or in small doses with a carrier oil like fractionated coconut oil is antibacterial and antifungal.

### **What should I avoid?**

Alcohol compromises the immune system and causes dehydration.

Caffeinated coffee, some teas especially black tea and sweet soft drinks or any sugary drinks.

Hard, crunchy, jagged foods like chips and biscuits can aggravate a sore throat.

Processed foods and take away are usually nutritionally deficient, loaded with unhealthy fats and sugars that lower your immunity.

So, head for the shops to get your stash of healthy foods to keep your immune system powered up and, if you do catch a cold or flu, make sure you are ready with what you need so you won't be one of those who goes out in public spreading their germs!

Be Well!

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