



# Tips for a Healthy Immune System

There are many ways to help support a strong immune system. Food is a great way to stay healthy during this cold and flu season!

## No Cures, No supplements

“There are no vaccines, no prescription drugs, no supplements, no pills, potions, lotions, or lozenges that we know of that can prevent or treat the Coronavirus.”  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Supplements:

Some supplements are dangerous to people on dialysis. **Talk with your doctor or dietitian before taking anything.**

Some supplements you **CANNOT** take include Goldenseal, Echinacea, and Elderberry, and Miracle Mineral Solution (MMS).

Some supplements such as Emergen-C and Airborne contain hidden sources of potassium, sodium, and phosphorus **we do not recommend taking them.**

Stick with the list of foods on the back of this flyer to get your immune supporting nutrients!

## Lifestyle Practices to support a healthy Immune system:

**Get some sleep!** Great sleep is one of the BEST things you can do to help build a strong immune system. Aim for 8-9 hours of rest each night!

**Get regular physical activity!** 30-60 minutes a day of moderate exercise, like walking, biking, gardening, etc. can help build a stronger immune system.

**Reduce stress!** Stress can cause your immune system to become fatigued and make you more likely to get sick. Take some time to engage in stress reducing activities, like meditation, yoga, time in nature, spending time with family or pets to help reduce stress.

## Avoid or limit these foods to keep your immune system strong:

- Overly processed and packaged foods.
- Salty foods. Limiting salt will help keep your fluid gains low and avoid fluid buildup in your lungs that could make a virus worse.
- Foods high in sugar.



We all need certain nutrients, vitamins, and minerals to keep our immune system strong. Try including some of the foods listed below, especially during cold and flu season!

**Protein**

- Chicken
- Fish
- Eggs
- Pork
- Dairy Products
- Tofu

**Vitamin C**

- Strawberries (1/2 cup)
- Grapefruit (1/2 cup)
- Tangerines (1)
- Pineapple (1/2 cup)
- Broccoli (1/2 cup)
- Cabbage (1/2 cup)

**Vitamin D**

- Wild caught salmon
- Milk, cottage cheese, and yogurt
- Shiitake mushrooms
- \*\*Check with your doctor about a supplement. You may already be getting IV vitamin D at dialysis

**Vitamin A**

- Carrots (1/2 cup)
- Bell Peppers (1)
- Broccoli (1/2 cup)
- Eggs
- Cantaloupe (1/2 cup)

**Vitamin E**

- Sunflower Seeds (1/2 cup)
- Olive Oil
- Broccoli (1/2 cup)
- Asparagus (4 spears)
- Chili peppers (1/4 cup)

**Zinc**

- Nuts and seeds (1/2 cup)
- Meat (chicken, beef, pork, turkey)

**Healthy Fats**

- Flax seeds, walnuts (1/2 cup)
- Cold water fish (salmon, tuna, sardines)
- Olive Oil

**Immune Boosting Smoothie**

Makes 1 smoothie  
3 low and 1 high potassium servings

- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen pineapple
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen strawberries
- 1/2 tsp fresh or frozen grated ginger
- 1/4 lemon, juiced
- 1 cup of liquid (water, milk, almond, soy, or rice milk)
- Optional: protein powder

Add all ingredients to a blender, blend until smooth.  
Add more liquid to get desired consistency.

Original recipe by Sam Clark, Bastyr Dietetic Intern, March 2020.

