

# COVID-19



## **5 Easy Ways to Boost Your Immune System During COVID-19**

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# You may be young and resilient but it's still important to take every step you can to stay safe and boost your immune system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Washing your hands and engaging in social distancing are great starts, but here are some additional, smaller ways you can potentially help protect yourself, and in turn, those around you.

## 1. Lower Alcohol Intake

Alcohol negatively affects the way gut microbes interact with the immune system. Alcoholic beverages also interfere with the lining of the gut barrier, which enables and increases bacteria entering the bloodstream. This affects the integrity and structure of the gastrointestinal tract. By lowering your alcohol intake during a virus outbreak like COVID-19, time is given to strengthen the internal functions of the body and immunity building blocks.

Focus, instead, on your intake of water. This will help aid the flushing and ridding of toxins within the body. Water carries oxygen to cells of the body, helping it to function properly. Aim for 2.5 to 3 litres of water per day.

## 2. Eat Leafy Greens

Greens might just be the answer if you want to boost your immune system during this time of uncertainty. From leafy greens to broccoli to bok choy, green vegetables contain key phytonutrients and micronutrients which flood the system with chemicals vital to a fully-functioning immune system.

Help arm your body with antioxidants by reaching for asparagus, zucchini, spinach, cabbage, and green beans. The rich green colour in these vegetables comes from an abundance of chlorophyll, structurally comparable to haemoglobin, making greens a naturally blood-building food. The intense multi-vitamin content in green vegetables helps to monitor weight, stabilize blood pH, strengthen vision, bone health, and liver health—all helping to boost your immune system.

## 3. Take Your Vitamins

The age-old saying “an apple a day keeps the doctor away” has truth behind it. When looking at protecting ourselves, there are some key vitamins we can focus on to aid our bodies in fighting illness. Vitamin C is one of the greatest immune-boosting vitamins of all, so much so, that a lack of the orange immune booster can raise your chances of getting sick. Adding a Vitamin C supplement or two into your day is highly-recommended in order to raise your chances of fighting off any bacterial invaders that may enter your system at this time. You can also focus on consuming foods high in Vitamin C, such as oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, tangerines, bell peppers, kale, spinach, and broccoli.

Additionally, Vitamin B6 is vital to supporting biochemical reactions in the immune system. Find Vitamin B6 in chicken, salmon, and tuna. Vitamin E

will help your body fight off infection with its powerful antioxidant components. Find Vitamin E in seeds, nuts, and spinach.

#### 4. Get Adequate Sleep

Although more sleep will not actually help boost your immune system, reduced sleep can increase your chances of getting sick. The average adult needs anywhere between seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Take the time to figure out what your optimum quantity of sleep is to feel fully rejuvenated and rested.

Without adequate sleep, the body does not create enough cytokines, a protein that targets inflammation and infection. Without this protein, our immune response is lowered, and we become far more susceptible to illness. Stock up on naps if your nights are shortened or interrupted. One or two 20-minute naps have been shown to offset the negative effects that sleep deprivation has on immunity. Try adding in one nap in the morning and one in the afternoon to keep your sleep levels stable.

#### 5. Reduce Stress, Find Calm

Finding ways to lower your stress levels will do more than simply boost your immune system during the COVID-19 outbreak. Panic is a mindset and finding

ways to allow calm amidst the chaos has its medical benefits as well. When stress levels are high, your body produces more cortisol than normal. This is commonly known as the 'fight or flight' mode. If you're in this heightened state of adrenaline for than 24 hours, your body will not be able to function at its normal rate or efficiency. When in flight or fight mode, your organs and natural functions cease to operate and all of your energy is acutely targeted in preparation for an attack.

Take time to meditate, listen to relaxing music, or have a bath. Put the COVID-19 stats away and take this time to slow down, reflect and reconnect back to your body.

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