

# Support Your Immune System

Getting sick often? Reacting to foods you never used to react to? Allergies getting the best of you each season? That's your immune system talking. The good news is there are steps you can take to rebuild your immune system and take back your health.



**HEAL YOUR GUT.** Over 70% of your immune system is housed in your gut. For you science people, this immunity “house” is called your gut associated lymphoid tissue (GALT). So when we don't take good care of our gut, our immune system suffers. Just by doing P20, you're improving your gut health by removing common inflammatory triggers and adding fiber-rich fruits, veggies, legumes, and whole grains, so kudos to you! To take your gut healing up a notch, add bone broth - it's rich in amino acids that are particularly helpful for healing the gut lining.

**KICK SUGAR TO THE CURB.** Sugar suppresses the immune system and can make it harder for your body to fight off germs and sickness. Each time excessive sugar is consumed, your immune system is suppressed for 3-6 hours. If excess sugar consumption is a regular occurrence (sugary cereal for breakfast, mocha frappuccino on the way to work, flavored yogurt at lunch, candy bar for a snack...) your immune system is constantly bogged down and operating at suboptimal levels.

**REDUCE STRESS.** Stress also suppresses the immune system, so take time to reset during the day, especially during the busy times (those times you say you “don't have time” to relax are the times you need it most). Our favorite ways to reduce stress: yoga, short meditations, acupuncture, epsom salt baths, walks, spending time outdoors, and simply breathing.

**SLEEP!** We know that our bodies recover during sleep so it's no surprise that sleep helps with immune function. Trouble sleeping at night? Try avoiding all electronics for an hour before bedtime. Instead, read a simple book, meditate, stretch...unwind! Aim for 7-9 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night

**PACK YOUR PLATE WITH FRUITS AND VEGGIES.** Antioxidants are powerful immunity boosters and are found in colorful fruits and veggies (yellow, red, orange, green, blue, purple). Tip: the richer the color, the more antioxidants a fruit or vegetable has. Citrus fruits, bell peppers, and leafy greens are good sources of vitamin C which can help fight colds and shorten the length of time spent feeling under the weather.

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**DON'T SKIMP ON ZINC** Vitamin C gets a lot of attention for fighting colds but zinc is also super important for strengthening the immune system. A zinc deficiency can negatively impact your immune system fighter cells so load up on zinc-rich foods like oats, nuts, seeds, lean meat, seafood, and eggs.

**GET PLENTY OF VITAMIN D** Vitamin D plays a huge role in immune response so go outside and soak up some sun! If you don't have access to natural rays most of the year, you may consider supplementing with vitamin D. You can also get vitamin D from fermented cod liver oil (along with omega-3 fatty acids!).