

# Newsletter

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## FLU FIGHTERS

### Foods for a powerful immune system

Curtis James, MSc (Canada's Healthy Living Guide)

A cold or flu bug can hit you like a ton of bricks when your immune system is weak. But when you've built up your immune system with natural foods and supplements, your body is much better equipped to fight off bacteria, viruses, toxins-whatever life throws at you. Even if you do come down with that cold or flu, a strong immune system will lessen the severity and length, and fortify your body against more serious diseases. Some foods are particularly good at keeping your immune system in top working order. Of course, chucking those cigarettes and opting for a mineral water with lime instead of a beer helps, too.

#### **Best Immune Boosters**

Good medicine is good food. Fill your plate with a selection of these nutrient-rich foods and you're on your way to building a powerfully strong immune system with each and every bite.

**Sterols and sterolins** are a type of fat present in the fibre of all plants. They can help your body fight off viruses, infection and inflammation. You also require more of these phytonutrients during weight loss or old age. *Sources:* plant seeds (such as pumpkin) vegetable oils, grain products, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and supplements.

**B-complex vitamins** are a group of eight vitamins that occur together in natural plant and animal sources. They're linked to stronger immunity. Because B vitamins are water soluble, they cannot be stored in the body and must be taken daily. They're also easily lost through refining, processing, cooking and peeling of foods. *Sources:* green vegetables, potatoes, whole-grain cereals, fresh or dried fruit, pulses (peas, beans and lentils) nuts and seeds.

**Zinc** plays a key role in resistance to infection and wound healing. *Sources:* egg yolks, dairy products, whole-grain cereals and seafood- particularly oysters and shellfish.

**Copper** is linked to a properly functioning immune system. It can be depleted by zinc. *Sources:* oysters, crab, cashews, clams, sunflower seeds, lentils and hazelnuts.

**Manganese** is another important antioxidant for immune function. *Sources:* brown rice, spinach, whole-wheat bread, sweet potatoes, navy beans, lima beans and pinto beans.

**Magnesium** is extremely important for boosting the immune system. At times of psychological stress, our magnesium requirements are even higher. *Sources:* oysters, shellfish, herring, legumes and milk.

**Micro-organisms** provide "good bacteria" for your digestive tract to prevent the over growth of harmful bacteria. *Sources:* yogurt, sauerkraut, kefir and acidophilus supplements.

**Amino acids** are the building blocks of protein and many are related to the proper functioning of your immune system. The amino acid arginine improves wound healing. L-lysine is especially good for herpes simplex (cold sores). *Sources:* fish, milk and legumes.

#### **Top Antioxidants**

**Vitamin A** – fish liver oil, eggs

**Vitamin C** – citrus fruits, strawberries, kiwi fruit, watermelon, black currants, red and green peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, tomatoes, potatoes

**Vitamin E** – vegetable oils, nuts, wheat germ, olives, margarine, milk

**Beta-carotene**- yellow-orange vegetables (carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin and butternut squash) yellow-orange fruits (apricots, mangoes, papaya, peaches, oranges) dark green, leafy vegetables (spinach, broccoli, lettuce, watercress)

**Selenium**- Brazil nuts, seafood, liver, grains, seeds

**For added antioxidant protection:** Allicin (found in garlic) bioflavonoids (from colourful fruits and veggies) lycopene (cooked tomatoes) pycnogenol (pine bark extract) quercetin and resveratrol (both in red wine) tea (green, black or ginseng)