

# GOOD NUTRITION HELPS SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNE HEALTH<sup>1</sup>



The immune system is the body's defense against infections. When it's working well, the immune system can help protect against illnesses.

There are several key factors that help keep a child's immune system healthy and strong. Some of these factors include:

- adequate rest
- regular physical activity
- good hygiene
- routine vaccinations
- healthy diet

Providing key nutrients as part of a well-balanced diet may help support and maintain your child's immune health.

## OFFERING CHILDREN A VARIETY OF FOODS WILL HELP THEM MEET THEIR NUTRITION NEEDS. CONSIDER FOODS THAT HELP THEM OBTAIN:



**PROTEIN** helps build antibodies and immune cells and plays an important role in healing and recovery.

**Sources:** Eggs, milk, yogurt, fish, lean beef, chicken, turkey, beans, soy products, nuts, and seeds



**VITAMIN C** helps build healthy skin, which is a barrier to microorganisms, and helps protect cells from damage due to its role as an antioxidant.

**Sources:** Citrus fruits (such as oranges, grapefruits, tangerines), strawberries, papayas, bell peppers, and brussels sprouts



**VITAMIN A** keeps the skin, tissues in the mouth, stomach, intestines, and the respiratory system healthy, and it helps regulate the immune system.

**Sources:** Colorful foods like carrots, sweet potatoes, broccoli, spinach, pumpkin, squash, and cantaloupe



**VITAMIN E** protects immune cells from damage due to its role as an antioxidant.

**Sources:** Fortified foods (cereals, fruit juices and margarines), nuts, and seeds



**VITAMIN D** helps with properly regulating immune cell function.

**Sources:** Fortified foods (milk, cereal, orange juice), and fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna)



**ZINC** supports creation of new immune cells, which contribute to the body's ability to heal from wounds.

**Sources:** Lean beef, chicken, turkey, crab, oysters, milk, whole grains, and seeds



**PREBIOTIC FIBER** provides fuel for beneficial bacteria in the gut to support the immune system.

**Sources:** Asparagus, bananas, apples, flaxseed, and oats

Talk to your healthcare provider to find appropriate sources of these nutrients if your child has a food allergy. When choosing the foods, select items that are developmentally appropriate for your child.

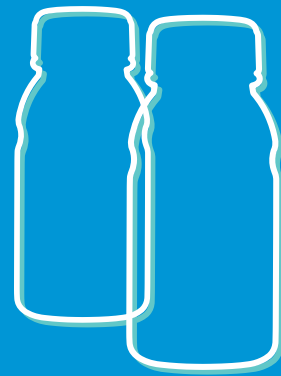
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Eating a well-balanced diet is an important part of creating and maintaining good immune health habits.

Encourage kids to eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables to increase dietary variety and nutrients.

For children who are unable to meet their recommended nutrient needs from diet alone, the addition of a complete, balanced nutrition supplement can help support growth and the immune system. Talk to your healthcare providers to find out more about nutrition supplements for your child's diet.



- Fluids help regulate body temperature and assist the body in keeping skin and mucous membranes hydrated.
- Our skin and mucous membranes are an important part of our defense system that protect our bodies against bacteria and viruses.



- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends active children consume water to maintain hydration<sup>2</sup>:
  - 1-3 years: 4 cups/day
  - 4-8 years: 5 cups/day
  - 8+ years: 7-8 cups/day
- In addition to water, electrolytes like sodium and chloride help your child's cells maintain fluid balance.

1. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Support your health with nutrition. Accessed 11/11/2021. <https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/preventing-illness/support-your-health-with-nutrition>.

2. Healthychildren.org. Choose water for healthy hydration. Accessed 11/11/2021. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Choose-Water-for-Healthy-Hydration.aspx>.

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