

# GOOD NUTRITION HELPS SUPPORT YOUR 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 and infections.



There are several key factors that help keep your immune system healthy and strong. Some of these factors include adequate rest, regular exercise, good hygiene, decreased stress, and a healthy diet.

Poor nutritional status is associated with decreased immune health.<sup>2</sup> Including key nutrients as part of a well-balanced diet can improve your nutrition, and may help support and maintain your immune health.

## YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER CHOOSING FOODS THAT INCLUDE:



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

**Sources:** Eggs, milk, yogurt, fish, lean meats, chicken, turkey, beans, soy products, and 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 (a substance that helps protect cells).

**Sources:** Citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruits, tangerines), strawberries, papaya, bell peppers, and Brussels sprouts



**VITAMIN A** keeps the skin, tissues in the mouth, stomach, and 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:** Almonds, sunflower seeds, peanut butter, vegetable oil, spinach, and broccoli



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

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

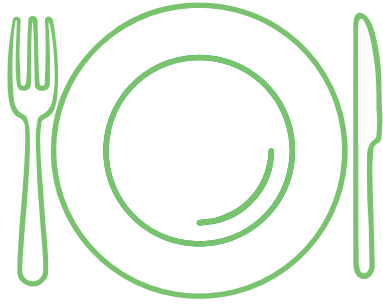


**ZINC** supports creation of new immune cells, which contributes to the body's ability to heal from wounds.

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

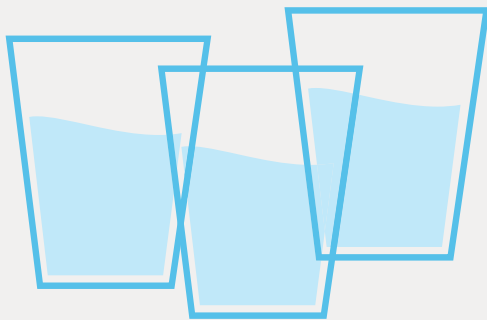
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Eating a well-balanced diet is an important part of maintaining good immune health habits.

Individuals who have poor food intake, or who have compromised health conditions, may require support to meet their nutrition needs. Oral nutritional supplements (ONS) can provide protein, vitamins, and minerals to help support the immune system. Talk to your health care provider to find out more about supplements for your diet, or the diet of someone for whom you may be caring.



Drinking enough fluid is also a key part of maintaining good health. Fluids help regulate body temperature and assist the body in eliminating bacteria and other harmful substances. Electrolytes help your cells maintain the right fluid balance for proper hydration.

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