

A silhouette of a person standing with their arms outstretched, set against a background of a sunset or sunrise sky with soft clouds.

How to build a strong immune system and protect yourself against Coronavirus

The role of our immune system

The immune system is a complex network of cells and proteins that provides the body's defence mechanism against viruses and infections. Our innate immune system has multiple interventions to enable us to fight off viral infections in healthy individuals. However, it is essential to build and maintain a strong immune system to help prevent against Coronavirus.

Key factors to support your health:

- Reducing stress and anxiety
- Getting plenty of rest and sleep (at least 7 hours)
- Eating foods which strengthen the immune system and upping your fruit, vegetable and fibre rich foods
- Daily moderate exercise (20-30 minutes per day)
- Avoidance of toxic chemicals, drugs and high alcohol consumption
- Practice meditation and relaxation techniques

Immune system enhancing antioxidants:

Plants have antioxidants which help to scavenge free radicals in the body to reduce reactive oxygen species and oxidative stress in the body. By increasing your levels of antioxidants in the body you can help to support a healthy immune system. Aim for 7 portions (80g or fist size) of vegetables and 2 portions of fruit each day.

Found in: All fruits and vegetables however, berries, lemons and other citrus fruits, rhubarb, dates, kiwi, strawberries, dark green leafy vegetables, garlic, herbs and spices, bell peppers, cabbage, broccoli and sprouts are good options.



Up your Vitamin C and Zinc to boost your immune function:

Vitamin C and Zinc have a significant role to enhance components of the human immune system. Eating a diet rich in these food sources can help to fight off infection and reduce symptoms of cold and flu.

Vitamin C Found in: Oranges, lemons, limes, berries, kiwifruit, broccoli, tomatoes, peppers, cauliflower, strawberries, kiwi, peas, melons, apples, papaya.

Zinc Found In: Seafood, shrimps, shellfish (esp. oysters), haddock, canned fish, ginger, lean red meat (esp. lamb), nuts (esp. pecans, brazils, almonds, peanuts), peas, turnips, egg yolk, whole wheat, rye, oats, seeds (esp. pumpkin), rice, lentils, and pulses.

Antiviral herbs and spices:

Some herbs and spices contain strong antiviral constituents and microbial actions which can help fight off infection.
Found In: Turmeric, ginger, garlic, onions, oregano, basil, peppermint, dandelion, cayenne pepper and cinnamon.

Preventative Measures:

- Isolation for those at risk
- Hygiene methods such as hand washing for 20 seconds using soap and hot water particularly after being in public places, after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose. If you need to sneeze or cough do so in a tissue and dispose of it immediately to reduce the risk of spreading germs and wash your hands afterwards.
- Try to avoid touching your face (eyes, nose mouth).
- Maintain social distancing when outside of at least 2m between yourself and anyone else.

