

Eating For a Healthy Immune System

An old proverb states, “Let food be your medicine, and let medicine be your food.” Unfortunately, rather than eating food as medicine, the vast majority of people today eat food as poison. Like toxins dumped into a river, the human body can take only so much before signs of disease and illness become manifest. The following is a list of suggestions to tip the scale back into balance and to promote a sense of health and well-being by engaging in a combination of behaviors that 1) enhances the natural abilities of the immune system and 2) decreases the amount of toxins that the immune system must assist in eliminating

1. Consume a good supply of antioxidants (beta-carotene, vitamins C and E, and selenium). These fight the damage of free radicals, which destroy cell membranes, DNA, RNA, and mitochondria. Antioxidants can be found in fresh fruits, vegetables, and fresh herbs.
2. Consume a good supply of fiber (30-40 grams/day with organic vegetables). Fiber helps clean the colon of toxic materials that might otherwise be absorbed into the bloodstream. Fiber is found in fresh fruits, vegetables, and some grains.
3. Drink plenty of fresh, clean (filtered) water. (A good goal is nearly clear urine.) Being properly hydrated is essential for the elimination of toxins and metabolic by-products.
4. Decrease consumption of pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, and fertilizers found on and in produce, many of which are toxic or carcinogenic. Eat organics whenever possible.
5. Consume an adequate supply of complete proteins to ensure intake of essential amino acids. (White blood cells are made up of amino acids from protein sources.)
6. Decrease or eliminate the consumption of processed foods (e.g., junk food, fast food). Think outside “the box” to avoid overconsumption of additives and preservatives that are used merely to extend the shelf life of a product.
7. Decrease consumption of antibiotics and hormones (e.g., found in dairy, beef, and chicken products). These can have a negative effect on your body’s physiology, including the elimination of the intestinal flora *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, leading to *Candida* infection.
8. Consume a good supply (and balance) of omega-3’s (cold-water fish and flaxseed oil) and omega-6’s (vegetable oils).
9. Decrease intake of saturated (solid) fats (meat and dairy products).
10. Decrease/avoid intake of trans-fatty acids, listed as partially hydrogenated oils in most baked goods and boxed items.
11. Eat a variety of food colors (fruits and vegetables with bioflavonoids).

12. Consume a good balance of foods with proper pH. (Many processed and pasteurized foods are acidic, tipping the scales by creating a hospitable breeding ground for diseases such as cancer).
13. Decrease intake of total percentages of fats. (High fat intake compromises the integrity of the lymphatic system, the highway taken by the immune system's cells.)
14. Replenish nutrients consumed by the stress response (e.g., B-complex vitamins, minerals).
15. Decrease consumption of simple sugars, including high-fructose corn syrup. (This not only take a load off of the pancreas, but it is also good for the immune system because cancerous tumors appear like sugars.)
16. Decrease or avoid excitotoxins (aspartame, nutrasweet, and MSG), which are believed to inhibit brain function.
17. Moderate your consumption of alcohol. (High alcohol intake compromises liver and immune system function).
18. Prepare food in the best way possible (e.g., steam veggies, no microwave ovens).
19. Eat organic produce and free-range meats whenever possible.
20. Avoid genetically modified organisms (Frankenfoods), which are known to promote allergy problems.
21. Use herbal therapies to boost the immune system (e.g., astragalus, Echinacea, shiitake mushrooms, milk thistle).

TIP: eat at least one meal a day for your immune system.