

Upstate Bariatric and Metabolic Nutrition Newsletter

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How to Strengthen Your Immune System



In the midst of the Coronavirus, you may be wondering: is there a pill or supplement that I can take to protect me from getting sick? Are there foods that I should be eating to boost my immune system?

First off, there is no magic food or pill that is guaranteed to boost your immune system and protect you against illness.

On the flipside, there are ways to keep your immune system functioning optimally, which can help to keep you healthy. You can stay healthy by eating a nutritious diet.

Fill your plate with Immune Boosting Nutrients

-Beta Carotene (gets converted to Vitamin A):

found in spinach, carrots, mango, broccoli, tomatoes and sweet potatoes, apricots, cantaloupe

-**Vitamin C-rich foods:** citrus, berries, melon, tomatoes, bell peppers, brussels sprouts, broccoli, cooked cabbage and cauliflower

-**Vitamin D:** found in fatty fish (such as salmon and sardines), eggs and fortified 100% juices, cheese, tofu and mushrooms

-**Zinc:** beans, chickpeas, lentils, tofu, nuts, seeds, fortified cereals, wheat germ, oysters, crab, lobster, beef, pork, dark meat poultry, pork chop and yogurt

-**Prebiotics:** whole grains, bananas, onions, garlic, leeks, asparagus, artichokes, beans

-**Probiotics:** "good" bacteria that promote health found in yogurt and kimchi, miso, tempeh and sourdough bread

-**Protein:** milk, yogurt, eggs, beef, chicken, seafood, seeds, nuts, beans, lentils

Take away tips:

- 1) Focus on eating a balanced eating plan all year long with a variety of fruits and vegetables
- 2) Practice good hygiene and hand washing to help prevent the spread of germs
- 3) Find healthy ways to cope with stress: deep breathing, physical exercise, meditation, listening to music
- 4) Lack of sleep can lead to a weakened immune system, aim for 7-9 hours a sleep each day (for adults)
- 5) Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated
- 6) Check with your health care provider and RDN before taking any herbal supplements. No ONE food or supplement can prevent illness.

References

Drayer, L. (2020). How to strengthen your immunity during the coronavirus pandemic. Part 1: Diet. *CNN*.

Esther Ellis MS, R. L. (2018). "How to Keep your Immune System Healthy". *Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.



Featured Recipe of the Month



*By Gretchen F. Brown, RD
Eat Right Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*

Ingredients

½ cup diced onion
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 cups frozen wild blueberries
¼ cup ketchup
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
¼ cup dark brown sugar
½ teaspoon salt
6 (6-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Directions

Before you begin: Wash your hands.

1. Prepare and heat grill.
2. On a stove, heat a medium saucepan to medium-high heat. Add olive oil and sauté onion for 2 minutes, or until translucent. Add blueberries, ketchup, balsamic vinegar, brown sugar and salt. Stir well. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, for 4 minutes.
3. Use an immersion blender (or transfer to a blender) to blend until smooth. Transfer ½ cup of sauce to one bowl and reserve for serving. Transfer remaining sauce to a second bowl for grilling/
4. Pound chicken breasts to flatten to ½-inch thickness. Place flattened chicken breasts on prepared grill.
5. Cook for 5 minutes on one side, turn and grill another 5 minutes.
6. Spread blueberry barbecue sauce evenly over chicken; grill 1 minute.
7. Turn chicken and spoon larger portion of sauce evenly over other side; grill 1 minute longer. Chicken is cooked when internal temperature reaches 165°F.
8. Serve with reserved ½ cup blueberry barbecue sauce.

Nutrition Information

Serving size: 1 chicken breast

Serves 6

Calories: 292; Total fat: 6g; Saturated fat: 1g;
Cholesterol: 94mg; Sodium: 385mg; Carbohydrates:
22g; Fiber: 1g; Sugars: 18g; Protein: 35g; Potassium:
397mg; Phosphorus: 267mg