

# Nutrition Bites - Issue 3

Welcome to the third edition!

**Boost Your immune System for Winter. In this issue I will look at how to boost your immune system for the winter months ahead.**



In this issue I will look at how to boost your immune system for the winter months ahead. Inside your body is your immune system – your gatekeeper – which is designed to

defend you against millions of bacteria, microbes, viruses, toxins and parasites that would love to invade your body and cause havoc and many unpleasant symptoms.

How well your immune system works depends on many factors and as we are approaching the season of colds, flus and other nasty bugs it is a good idea to try to get our immune systems in tip top condition so we succumb to as few bugs as possible and if we do succumb to recover quickly.

Natural health practitioners actually view having one or 2 colds a year as positive and healthy – like a mini detox – helping your body to get rid of wastes and toxins that have accumulated. The unpleasant symptoms you experience during an infection such as a runny nose, fever, coughing and diarrhoea are actually part of the natural healing process.

So getting sick now and again can actually help keep your immune system in peak condition, however catching lots of infections such as stomach bugs, colds or tonsillitis can indicate your immune system is struggling.

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## The Immune Power Diet

Good nutrition is vital for a healthy immune system—your immune system needs a good range of nutrients to stay in tip top condition.

**Eat good quality proteins** daily such as meat, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts and seeds – these foods help the body to repair itself.

Ditch white refined carbohydrates and focus on **wholegrain carbohydrates** such as wholegrain breads, oats, barley, brown rice, quinoa etc. These provide many vitamins and minerals needed for a good immune response.

**Obviously plenty of fruit and veg**, eat rainbow colours of green, orange, red, yellow and purple for a full spectrum of nutrients. Try raw, steamed, stir fried, stewed, in soups, smoothies and salads. Reishi, oyster and shiitake mushrooms have antiviral and antibacterial properties. Try fresh or dried in soups and casseroles.

**Essential fatty acids** found in oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, trout, herring, seeds and nuts, flaxseed and walnut oils help boost the immune system.

**Especially power boosting foods** include avocados, blueberries, chillies, citrus fruits, dark chocolate, fish and shellfish, garlic, ginger, onions, parsley, rosemary, seaweeds all have different nutrients for the immune system such as zinc, selenium, Vitamins A, C & E, B6, magnesium, and plant chemicals called phytonutrients. Also enjoy winter veg such as sweet potatoes, parsnips. We still need to drink plenty of water in winter but if cold water does not appeal try some warming herbal teas such as apple or ginger with lemon and ginger, ginseng or Echinacea.

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## Stress Facts:

During stress our bodies consume up to 30% of all our nutrients from food straight away so we can see how it is easy to become nutrient deficient. Free radicals are produced when we are under stress and these damage our bodies cells and accelerated the ageing process.

Our Adrenal Glands are tiny glands which sit upon our kidneys and they are our stress Glands—they help your body to respond to stress, maintain energy and regulate immune system, blood pressure and blood sugar control. Today it is very easy for these glands to become imbalanced.

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## Enemies of the Immune System

The following can compromise our immune health and reduce our resistance to infections. Burnt food, too much coffee, alcohol, sugary foods, additives and chemicals in foods, antibiotics and drugs,. Lack of or too much exercise can have a detrimental effect as can stress, smoke, pollution, overwork and toxic metals – many of which deplete vital nutrients which your immune system needs to stay healthy.

Also negative emotions and attitudes such as anger, pessimism, frustration, lack of sleep, job dissatisfaction,

unhappiness will compromise your immune system. So look out for these immune and energy drainers in your daily life and try to take small positive steps to change. See a counsellor or life coach if you think you need help—it can be an empowering experience

## Vitamins and Herbs for the Immune System



These can help boost the immune system

and reduce severity of infections and help with symptoms. They include Vitamin C, zinc, a good quality multi vitamin / mineral, Echinacea, cats claw, glutamine,

elderberry, astragalus, propolis, colloidal silver, garlic and green superfoods. Some have antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal properties, some enhance the immune systems ability to fight infection.

Also it is good to supplement with probiotics which are natural strains of healthy bacteria found in your gut. Healthy bacteria are essential for good immune response. These supplements are especially important after stomach bugs and antibiotics.

Did you know that a large part of your immune system is located in your gut? So a healthy gut and digestive system are vital for good immune health. We need our digestive systems to be working well to absorb all the nutrients we need to keep our immune systems healthy.

If you do succumb to bugs this winter wrap up warm, drink plenty of fluids, gargle with salt water or tea tree oil, have a Hot Toddy and try making a healing soup from red onions, garlic, carrots, sweet potato, fresh ginger, turmeric and coconut milk. Puree and serve with love! Relax and let your body heal.

In today's fast paced society we often try to keep going, taking lots of paracetamol and lemsips, dragging our unwell bodies into work—it is really best for our bodies to rest a little and recover from the infection. If we push ourselves this can weaken our immune system all the more.

## Other Immune Helpers

Other factors which can have a positive effect on our immune systems are fresh air, nature, natural light, moderate exercise, music, peace and calmness. Also good relationships, meditation, Tai Chi, yoga, deep breathing, gratitude, forgiveness and a positive attitude can help.

Think good thoughts about others as much as you can. Sex can help boost our immune systems but don't go crazy as this can deplete immune function! Fun and laughter can also enhance our immune response. So this winter try to have several walks in the winter daylight, meet up with friends, eat good food and laugh well to keep your immune system strong. Enjoy your glass of mulled wine and mince pie alongside your healthy foods! A little of what you enjoy does you good – nobody can be good all the time!

It is also a good idea to try to do something you want each day rather than everything being what you have to do.

## IMMUNE BOOSTING RECIPES

### Immune Berry Booster (serves 1)

150g (5oz) live natural bio yoghurt (sheeps, cows or goats)  
100g (4oz) berries – strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackcurrant  
1 tablespoon wheatgerm  
1 tablespoon mixed ground seeds – sesame, sunflower, pumpkin, linseed

Mix together and serve.

### Salmon with mashed sweet potato and Brussels sprouts in a hummus and mushroom sauce (serves 2)

2 pieces salmon fillet or 2 salmon steaks  
2 teaspoons vegetable stock concentrate eg bullion  
2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks  
black pepper  
225g (8oz) Brussels sprouts, washed and trimmed  
225g (8oz) shiitake mushrooms  
100g / 4 oz hummus

Wash the salmon and pat dry with kitchen paper. Dilute the veg stock in 1 pint of boiling water in a large saucepan. Leave to cool until just warm. Place the salmon in the stock and bring gently to a simmer. Poach for a few minutes. Alternatively grill the salmon under a moderate heat for a few minutes on each side, until just cooked. Meanwhile boil and mash the sweet potatoes, adding the black pepper to taste. Boil or steam the Brussels sprouts for 5 mins. Sauté the mushrooms in the oil for 2 mins, then add a little water, cover and turn the heat down. Let them cook for 5 mins until tender and juicy. Puree the mushrooms and add the hummus.

Arrange the salmon, mashed sweet potatoes and Brussels sprouts on a plate, pour the sauce over the fish and serve.