

In Good Health

Boosting your Immune System

The immune system is made up of a collection of all of the biological processes that take place within our bodies to protect against disease. The immune system identifies and destroys viruses, parasites, toxins and bacteria which can infect our body, whilst making sure not to destroy healthy cells or tissues that the body creates.

The main components of the immune system are the skin, thymus, spleen, lymph system, bone marrow, white blood cells, antibodies, complement system and hormones. You need to keep your immune system healthy so that it can work at its full potential.

One effective way of improving your immune system is via vaccinations. There are many diseases which, having been caught once, can never be caught again. There are also a number of measures you can take to stay healthy, boost your immune system and improve your chances of fighting off colds and flus this winter.

Eat lemons

Not only high in vitamin C, lemons restore acid-alkali balance, keeping the body's pH at a level which supports healthy bacteria, instead of harmful bacteria and viruses.

Sleep well

Getting your 6 to 10 hours sleep can help balance hormones and improve mood and thinking.

Drink lots of water

To help flush toxins out of your system and to prevent dehydration.

Reduce caffeine intake

Caffeine robs the body of minerals and vitamins and is dehydrating.

Cut down on sugar

You will soon notice an improvement in energy levels and immunity, as sugar can suppress the immune system, upset the mineral balance in the body and affect the absorption of calcium and magnesium.



Eat raw fruit and vegetables

For antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, enzymes and fibre; to protect cells and boost your immune system.

Eat immune boosting foods

Alfalfa, apple, blackberry, blueberry, broccoli, garlic, ginger, green tea, kelp, lemon, onion, parsley, spirulina, turmeric and wheat grass.

Look to herbs for a boost

There are many herbal supplements that can give the body a boost during the cold and flu season, including Aloe Vera, Echinacea, Grapeseed, Licorice Root, Pine Bark, Rosehip and Olive leaf extract. Visit a health food store or naturopath to find out more.

Cold and Flu

The common cold is an acute, infectious viral disease of the upper respiratory system. The symptoms of a cold include a runny nose, sneezing or nasal congestion, sore throat and coughing. A cold generally lasts between several days and two weeks and in most cases will resolve itself without medical intervention.

The flu is another infectious disease which usually presents with the same symptoms as above, with the addition of muscle aches and pains, fatigue, exhaustion, fever, chills, nausea, vomiting and sometimes a dry and persistent cough. There are many strains of influenza which will cause varying levels of symptoms; some strains can be prevented with an annual vaccination. In more serious cases, especially in the young and elderly, the flu can cause pneumonia, which can be fatal.

Both colds and the flu are transmitted by saliva, nasal secretions, faeces and blood, through direct contact with the secretions or from contact with contaminated surfaces. The best way of preventing infection is by maintaining good hygiene.

Tips to avoid catching a cold or flu

Cover up when you sneeze or cough, but not with your bare hands as the germs will 'stick' to them and be passed on easily. Try to cough or sneeze into a tissue (and then throw it out immediately), into your shoulder, or into the air AWAY from people near you.

Avoid touching your face, as the virus can enter through your nose, eyes and mouth.

Drink plenty of water to flush toxins out of your system.

Get outside and get some fresh air; air-conditioning and heating tend to dry out your body making you more vulnerable to disease. Especially during cold weather people stay indoors, which means more germs are circulating in crowded, dry rooms.

Exercise regularly to help increase the body's natural virus fighting capabilities.

Quit smoking! Smoke dries out your nasal passages and paralyses the small hairs which would normally sweep cold and flu viruses out of the lungs and nasal passage.

Alcohol suppresses the immune system and dehydrates your body, so cut down on your consumption.



Green Tea

Green tea has always been and remains a popular tea throughout Asia; many of the health benefits associated with the tea have been derived from studies of those in Asian countries who typically drink around 3 cups per day.

Although many of the benefits of green tea are yet to be proven, it is high in antioxidants and health promoting flavonoids including catechins. Green tea is reputed to be helpful with prevention of cancer, cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, impaired immune function and high cholesterol. Green tea may also reduce inflammation associated with Crohn's disease and ulcerative

colitis and boost the metabolism to help burn fat.

Green tea also contains alkaloids including caffeine, theobromine, and theophylline. These alkaloids provide green tea's stimulant effects; unless drinking decaffeinated, caffeine intake from green tea should be monitored. L-theanine, an amino acid compound found in green tea, is reputed to have a calming effect on the nervous system.

Green tea drinkers appear to have better overall health and have a lower risk of a wide range of diseases.

Health benefits of **yoga**



Improved flexibility

The stretching nature of yoga will promote flexibility, allowing for a greater range of movement in muscles and joints.

Improved strength

By supporting the weight of your own body during the various yoga poses, and moving slowly between poses, you can improve your strength.

Muscle tone

As yoga improves your strength, it also increases muscle tone by shaping long, lean muscles.

Pain prevention

By promoting strength and flexibility, yoga can help prevent certain types of back and joint pains. Yoga can improve alignment and promote proper posture, to prevent some forms of neck, shoulder and back pain.

Reduced stress

Yoga places emphasis on breathing properly, aligning your body and mind and focusing on being in the moment, all of which can help relieve stress. By concentrating on what your body is doing, it is possible to achieve a calmness of mind.

Dry skin

The symptoms of dry skin can range from a feeling of 'tightness' in the skin, to itching, scaling, flaking and cracks in the skin. These symptoms occur most often on the arms, thighs, lower legs and sides of the abdomen, however can occur all over the body.

Just as the symptoms can range from mild to severe, so the causes of dry skin can also vary greatly. In the milder cases, dry skin is often a result of exposure to sun or wind. In some cases medications can play a role in drying out the skin, as can air-conditioning and fan-forced heating.

In other cases skin dryness can be from the body's natural oils being stripped by too frequent bathing and harsh soaps. Detergents, chemicals in spas and beauty products and rough textured clothing and linen (wool,

synthetics, etc) can all exacerbate the symptoms of dry skin.

Nutritional deficiencies, especially deficiencies of vitamin A and Bs can also contribute to dry skin.

Dry skin may also be a precursor to skin conditions such as dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis and the most severe form of dry skin, ichthyosis.

To relieve itching short, less frequent warm (not hot) showers are recommended. Instead of soap, use a mild, pH neutral skin cleanser or wash and pat skin dry rather than rubbing it. Moisturise often with a thick cream or oil, but avoid those containing alcohol as this can dry the skin further. Drink plenty of water and use a cool compress to reduce inflammation. If the air is particularly dry try using a humidifier, and speak to your pharmacist about over-the-counter products which can soothe and help with inflammation.

If dry, itchy skin is affecting your day to day life or preventing you from sleeping, seek advice from your doctor.

Yoga What is yoga?

Yoga is a form of exercise promoting flexibility and meditation, which originated in India. The word 'yoga' means 'union', as the poses and sequence of physical postures promotes a union of body, mind and spirit.

Yoga is a gentle form of exercise, and offers poses at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. It is possible to teach yourself yoga from books, websites or by following a DVD; there are also many classes offered at gyms and health centres.

Benefits of walking

Walking is one of the best exercise options available – it is free and convenient, requires no special training or equipment and most importantly is good for improving cardiovascular fitness, reducing the risk of osteoporosis, increasing muscle power and endurance and promoting healthy weight loss or maintenance.

Walking is most beneficial when undertaken at medium intensity for long durations (of at least 45 minutes). At a moderate level you should still be able to talk comfortably whilst walking. One of the great things about walking is you can adjust it to suit your fitness level by simply walking slower or faster, for a longer distance or by including a few hills. Remember to always stretch before and after walking to reduce the risk of injury.

Walking at a moderate pace can burn up to 884kj per hour in a female of average weight, and up to 1105kj per hour in a male of average weight.

If you need further convincing, it is good to know that walking is environmentally friendly – walking instead of driving for just 10km a year can save up to 300 kilograms of greenhouse pollution each year.

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Four Foods to Eat Everyday

1. ORANGES

Oranges are an excellent source of vitamin C: just one orange supplies almost 120 percent of our daily vitamin C requirements. Vitamin C is one of the major antioxidants in our bodies, disarming free radicals and preventing damage in cells. Oranges are also a great source of folic acid, fibre, beta-carotene, and anti-cancer compounds called flavanoids and carotenoids.

2. DARK LEAFY GREENS

Dark leafy greens such as bok choy, broccoli, spinach and other Asian greens are high in calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, phosphorus and zinc. In addition to being a powerhouse for vitamin A, one cup of most dark, leafy green vegetables supply the daily requirement of beta-carotene, and vitamin C, E and K. Dark leafy greens are also high in fibre (can you believe they have more than oat bran!), folic acid and dozens of trace minerals and nutrients.

3. BRAN CEREAL

Bran is a rich source of insoluble fibre and it's been known for a long time that a diet high in fibre controls bowel movements. Bran cereal is also a potent anti-cancer agent and has an effect on the incidence of heart disease and diabetes. Despite the dull demeanor of bran it is one of those foods that can be added to or 'hidden' in other foods quite easily. Try a bowl of high fibre cereal for breakfast or sprinkle some bran flakes over your normal cereal.

4. YOGHURT

Yoghurt is a great source of calcium which is vital in the prevention of osteoporosis. It also boosts immune function, fights bacteria, has anti-cancer properties, helps your muscles to work properly, aids in blood clotting and may prevent yeast infections. Yoghurt also contains live cultures, which might sound disgusting, but are actually really good for you by helping to keep your digestive system in top condition. Enjoy a tub of your favourite **low fat** yoghurt for breakfast, as a snack or as an after dinner dessert.