



Top 7 Superfoods To Boost Immunity



Introduction

Most of us are health-conscious on some level or another. We generally try to eat right, exercise, get enough sleep, and adopt good habits associated with healthy living.

But how many of us specifically focus on the immune system as the core of good health and vitality? Not all good habits necessarily lead to a strong and healthy immune system. It is absolutely essential to have a strong immune system if we want to enjoy long-term health and protection from disease.

The foods we eat directly impact the immune system's health more than anything else. So, if you're already eating a healthy balanced diet, kudos to you – but you need to take it one step further.

Did you know that there are certain "superfoods" that if consumed on a regular basis can have an almost miraculous effect on the health and strength of your immune system? These foods are packed with nutrients and disease-fighting properties

that will supercharge the immune system like nothing else. That's why they're aptly named superfoods.

This book will give you the simple, basic information that you need to know about your immune system and why nutrition is vital. It will list seven immunity-boosting superfoods and explain how they impact immunity. It will also give you some additional immunity-boosting hacks that can be easily incorporated into any lifestyle.

It's as simple as that. Thankfully, the amazing immune system is very low maintenance. There are no complicated strategies or routines, no expensive supplements and no restrictive diets. By making a few simple changes to your diet and daily routine, you will achieve some amazing, long-lasting changes.

Chapter 1: The Immune System in Action

Your Body's Defense System

The immune system is an intricate and complex defense system that is nothing short of mind-boggling. This amazing network of cells, tissues and organs works to detect any harmful invaders that enter your body (viruses, parasites, microbes, and bacteria) and rallies to wage war against the enemy. These harmful substances are called antigens.

The amazing immune system is programmed to recognize millions of antigens ranging from the common cold to cancer antigens. When these antigens enter the body, the immune system has one mission: kill, kill, kill!

We are bombarded with these harmful substances every second of our lives. They are found on surfaces, things we touch, in the air we breathe, and even in foods we eat. Thankfully, our immune system is able to deflect the majority of these before they can get

into our system. This battle is being waged nonstop as we happily go about our daily lives.

A rather gross but good illustration of this is what happens when an animal dies. Within hours, its body becomes infested with millions of bacteria, microbes and parasites - simply because the immune system has stopped working. This is exactly what would happen to our live bodies - God forbid - if our immune system stopped working.

How It Works

The immune system basically works to protect us in three ways:

1. It detects and destroys antigens before they enter our bodies.
2. If antigens penetrate the defense barrier and get into our system, a barrage of proteins, chemicals and white blood cells rush to attack and destroy them before they can reproduce.
3. In the event that the antigen does reproduce and spread, the immune system goes into overdrive to attack and destroy them all.

Naturally, the stronger your immune system, the better it will be able to destroy antigens before they even enter your body or at least in the early stages. A good example is people who get over colds and flu quickly or generally heal faster. This indicates a strong immune system that immediately leaps to their defense!

Chapter 2: Warning Signs - How to Tell When Your Immune System Needs Attention

The main problem associated with a weak immune system is inflammation, which causes a range of illnesses and conditions. The following symptoms indicate that your immune system is not functioning as well as it should be.

1. Constipation/ diarrhea

Frequent bouts of diarrhea or constipation indicate inflammation in the gut caused by a bacteria or virus that your immune system is too weak to destroy. Recurring or chronic digestion problems are typically poor immune system health.

2. Slow healing

Wounds or scratches that tend to get swollen, inflamed and take longer to heal indicate a weak immune system.

3. Cold hands and feet

Inflammation of the blood vessels constricts blood flow to the extremities, causing them to feel cold and numb. Again, this is a symptom of a sluggish immune system.

4. Frequent colds

If you suffer from frequent colds that are hard to shake off, this is a sure sign that your immune system is not functioning optimally and is too weak to detect and destroy even a simple cold antigen.

5. Elevated stress levels

Have you noticed how you often get sick after a particularly stressful time in your life? Research has shown that long-term stress weakens the immune system. It's crucial that you make time to relax and de-stress on a regular basis.

6. Frequent infections

Sore throat, ear infections, cuts and sores that become infected are all signs that your immune system needs a major boost.

7. Fatigue

When your immune system is weak, your body will try to conserve energy and direct it towards your sluggish immune system to keep it working. The result is often chronic fatigue

If you are experiencing one or more of these warning signs, it's time to give your immune system some much-needed attention to prevent your health from deteriorating further.



Chapter 3: Top 7 Immunity-boosting Superfoods

The signs of a struggling immune system must never be ignored. The easiest and most effective way to strengthen your immune system is to feed it with the nutrients it needs to help it function at peak performance.

Start eating the following superfoods on a regular basis - and be prepared to be surprised by how quickly our health will improve.

1. Honey

Potent properties: antimicrobial, antioxidant, antimicrobial and hygroscopic (helps with tissue healing and regeneration).

Since the dawn of history, honey has been known for its near-miraculous medicinal properties. Among other things, it was used to cure coughs and digestive disorders, treat skin problems, and was used as an ointment to promote wound healing.

Honey is packed with minerals and essential vitamins. That promotes immune system healing and regeneration. This delicious natural sweetener works in tandem with your immune system to eliminate free radicals, kill harmful bacteria and promote overall rejuvenation of cells and tissues.

Studies have found that consuming a small amount of honey daily strengthens the immune system and enables it to quickly fight infections. It also helps the body to heal faster. In many cultures, honey is often recommended to patients recovering from surgery to promote faster healing of tissues and reduce scarring.

Honey is also a great cure for chronic diarrhea and other digestive issues, sore throat, cough and helps relieve acid reflux. All of these conditions are relayed to a weak immune system.

Note: The darker color of the honey, the more antioxidants and disease-fighting properties it contains. Raw honey is also more potent and better-tasting than processed honey, which is heated and filtered, making it lose some of its potent properties.

Best Practice: One tablespoon of honey each day is all you need to boost your immunity and enjoy all the other benefits of this natural energy source. It is best taken in a glass of lukewarm

water or in a herbal tea first thing in the morning. You can also increase your intake of honey moderately by using a teaspoonful as a sweetener in beverages or a delicious topping for on yogurt, oatmeal, or fresh fruit.

2. Mushrooms

Potent properties: Immune stimulant, immuno-modulator, antibacterial, antimicrobial.

An occasional cold, minor injury or insect bite is actually good for you. It exercises the immune system and keeps it strong, alert, and ready to combat more serious infections should they occur.

The seemingly mundane mushroom is an immune stimulant, meaning that it acts as an energizer that exercises the immune system and gives it a good "workout" without you actually getting sick. In fact, making mushrooms a regular part of your diet can boost your immune system by a whopping 300 percent.

The potent antibacterial agents contained in mushrooms also help fight viruses, bacteria, and fungi and they are a good source of essential minerals needed by the immune system.

While all types of mushrooms contain essential immunity-boosters, the following types are especially potent:

- **Maitake mushrooms:** The American Cancer Association has listed this mushroom as a top immunity strengthening food that also helps fight the growth of cancer cells. Maitake mushrooms can be found in most high-end supermarkets and health food stores.
- **Reishi mushrooms:** This mushroom is recognized by the Japanese government as an effective cancer treatment. It is packed with a number of cancer-fighting substances that have been known to treat prostate cancer and several types of tumors. It's also very effective in alleviating bronchitis and asthma.
- **Shitake mushrooms:** Another potent pathogen-killer that destroys many types of viruses and bacteria. The great news is that shitake mushrooms are available at most grocery stores.
- **Lion's mane mushrooms:** They have been used for centuries in Chinese medicine as super-powerful immunity boosters. They are also a great "brain food" that promotes cognitive function, focus and memory.

Overall, mushrooms are also packed with essential minerals like copper and selenium, which balance and promote immune system health. They also prevent high blood pressure, breast and prostate cancer, and are excellent for heart health.

Best practice: A half-cup every day is all you need to reap all the benefits of mushrooms. They are so versatile that they can be added to almost any dish, either on their own or incorporated into soups.

3. Oranges

Potent properties: Antioxidant, antibacterial, vitamin C
When we think oranges, we immediately think vitamin C, the best protection against cold and flu. Oranges are possibly the highest food in vitamin C concentration. One medium orange will provide your body with 162 percent of the recommended daily intake of vitamin C.

In addition to being a powerful antioxidant that neutralizes free radicals, vitamin C also strengthens the immune system by promoting the production of white blood cells. White blood cells are the immune system's key weapons in fighting infections. Oranges also contain other substances that are important for immune system function such as copper, vitamin A and vitamin B-9.

Note: Citrus fruits in general contain vitamin C so if you don't like oranges, you can opt for lemons, limes, grapefruit,

mandarins or tangerines. It's best to consume them fresh in juices or peeled and eaten raw.

Best practice: Don't wait till you get sick then overload your body with orange juice. Instead, make it part of your daily diet. Fresh orange juice should always be your first choice over canned or frozen. One glass in the morning and another in the evening will supercharge your immune system like nothing else. If you love oranges, do eat them as well as often as possible, or alternate them with other citrus fruits. They make great snacks and healthy desserts.

4. Sweet Potatoes

Potent properties: Beta-carotene, vitamin A, antioxidants
When was the last time you ate sweet potatoes? Sadly, sweet potatoes are not high on our list of regularly consumed foods. But they rank high on the list of immunity-boosting superfoods.

The much-neglected sweet potato is packed with vitamin A, which the immune system requires in order to function optimally, as it promotes the active disease-fighting white blood cells. Just one sweet potato gives you 400 percent of the required daily intake of vitamin A!

Sweet potatoes also boost resistance to infections. They contain beta-carotene and antioxidants, both of which destroy harmful free radicals.

With regards to overall health, sweet potatoes fight and alleviate chronic inflammations like arthritis and asthma. They are thought to prevent colon cancer and heart attack and stroke.

Best practice: It's recommended that you eat a half cup of boiled sweet potatoes every day, or a whole boiled or baked sweet potato every other day. They are delicious and filling, so making them a regular item on your diet should not be a chore!

5. Fish

Potent properties: Omega-3 Fatty acids

Fish is packed with healthy Omega-3 fats, which improve immunity by promoting production and activity of white blood cells. In addition to strengthening the immune system, this superfood is just plain healthy in so many ways. Some of these health benefits include:

- Reduces risk of stroke and heart attack
- Contains nutrients that promote brain health

- Promotes longevity
- Decreases the risk of autoimmune disease
- Improves eyesight
- Improves sleep

Bear in mind that not all fish are created equal. For maximum immune-boosting benefits, make sure you eat the following types of fish:

- Wild salmon
- Mackerel
- Tuna
- Oysters (not technically a fish but are great for promoting immune system function)
- Char
- Cod
- Rainbow trout
- Halibut
- Sardines

Note: If fish is not an option for you, fish oil supplements are a great alternative. Research findings indicate that fish oil improves the immune system response and increases white blood cell production.

Best practice: To keep your immune system strong and healthy, you should eat fish twice or three times a week - or every

day, if you love it! It's simply the healthiest source of protein that you can put into your body.

6. Garlic

Potent properties: antioxidant, antibacterial, antiviral, antibiotic.

Raw garlic has been used for centuries as a powerful medicinal herb. Its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties are so potent that it is called a natural antibiotic. Perhaps the most potent immunity-boosting compound found in garlic is allicin, a powerful antibacterial that prevents blood clotting, lowers cholesterol, and kills bacteria.

It has also been known to stop the growth of certain cancers. Naturally, its properties make it a powerful immunity booster and help your body to ward off illness and infection.

The regular consumption of garlic helps your body fight almost any kind of infection. The list includes common cold, flu viruses, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, and infected wounds. It is also believed to prevent certain types of cancer. A recent study showed that the daily consumption of raw garlic lowered the

number of colds by 63 percent and lessened cold symptoms by 70 percent. This is reason enough to fall in love with garlic! Garlic has been proven to lower cholesterol levels. High cholesterol can cause the immune system to become sluggish and weak.

More importantly, eating garlic on a daily basis will protect you from getting sick in the first place. You will notice that you get fewer colds and sore throats, fewer gum, ear and nose infections and recovery from injuries or surgery will be much faster.

Best practice: One or two cloves of raw garlic daily will leave you amazed at the results. The cloves can be finely chopped and swallowed down with a glass of water. If you have a liking for garlic, that's even better. Make it a habit to use fresh garlic in your meals.

7. Chicken Soup

Potent properties: Antiviral, antibiotic, antimicrobial.

Our mothers and grandmothers can teach us a thing or two about good immune system health. Remember that big, fragrant pot of chicken soup your mom would make when someone was in bed with a cold? Well, it's just what the doctor ordered! Nothing can

help you get over a bad bout of flu faster than homemade chicken soup.

Chicken soup gives your immune system a hefty dose of protein, calcium, B vitamins, magnesium, and zinc. These ingredients work together to rev up the immune system and keep it going strong. When you are sick, it speeds up healing by keeping you hydrated and nourished.

Best practice: If you are sick, have chicken soup several times a day to alleviate runny nose, congestion, cough, and other cold and flu symptoms. But don't wait till you get sick to have chicken soup. A bowl of this superfood twice or three times a week will help maintain your immune system to ward off potential colds and flu.

Remember, the keyword here is "homemade". Soup in a can is easier to prepare but is not as effective due to all the preservatives and additives it contains – plus, it just doesn't taste as good. Make your own soup using your favorite ingredients and vegetables and enjoy its full benefits and delicious taste.

All of these superfoods can also be combined to become super superfoods to keep your immune system functioning at its peak. For example, you can add a spoonful of honey to orange juice for

a delicious energy drink. Fish with a garlic-herb sauce and a side helping of sweet potatoes make for a delicious dinner. Sweet potatoes topped with honey make a satisfying and healthy dessert or breakfast. Mushrooms can be a tasty addition to chicken soup or served with fish.

The combinations are endless. So, get creative and come up with combinations of recipes where you can incorporate these foods to your best advantage.

The bottom line: The great things about these superfoods is that they are versatile, tasty and liked by most people. They can be combined into dishes, eaten on their own, or combined so that they never get boring or bland.

When consumed regularly, the immune-boosting properties of these superfoods will immediately kick in. If you are experiencing symptoms of a weak immune system, they will start to disappear within just a few weeks. You will have more energy, get sick less often, sleep better, and look better, all because of a few simple changes in your diet. How amazing is that?

Chapter 4: Super-simple Lifestyle Hacks for a Stronger Immune System

Our lifestyles are one of the key factors that impact our immune system. We can lay the blame on pollution, pesticides, heavy metals in our water, food additives, and myriad other things. But the truth is that our habits play a major role in how our bodies confront and deal with viruses and bacteria.

Naturally, diet is one of the key factors that affect how our immune system functions, as we have seen in the previous chapter. But there are other simple changes you can make to your lifestyle to further boost your immunity and maintain strong immune health.

Here are some additional super-simple hacks that you can apply to further strengthen and reinforce your natural defense system. As you will see, all of them are just plain common sense and yet, it's surprising how many people overlook them or downplay their importance.

1. Get enough sleep

Bad sleep habits or poor-quality sleep raises stress hormone levels, which in turn weaken the immune system. Scientists are not exactly sure how this happens but research has confirmed that there is a direct relationship between sleep and the body's ability to fight illness.

The specific results of a recent study should bring this home more clearly. The study found that well-rested people who received a flu vaccine developed stronger immunity to the flu virus, whereas people with poor sleep habits developed less resistance.

Burning the candle at both ends, staying up late, or simply being unable to sleep well is not something to be taken lightly. It's crucial that you structure regular sleep times and to make sure your sleep environment is conducive to a good night's rest.

2. Exercise regularly

Exercise doesn't necessarily mean strenuous workouts at the gym or a formal exercise class. Thirty minutes a day of moderate exercise like walking, swimming, or cycling can do wonders for immune system health. If you are already practicing some form

of exercise, great. If not, you should seriously consider getting more active.

Exercise works to boost the immune system on two levels. It floods your body with "feel-good" hormones and promotes better sleep, both of which strengthen your body's ability to fight disease.

3. Reduce sugar intake

We've all heard the expression that sugar is poison. It is certainly true when it comes to its effect on our immune system. When sugar gets into our bloodstream, it reduces the number of immune system cells that attack and destroy bacteria. This effect can last for hours after you consume a sugary soft drink or other sugar-packed food.

Reduce your sugar intake by using natural sweeteners like honey or molasses, and eating fresh sweet fruits like bananas, grapes and peaches. Fresh juice and smoothies are another great way to satisfy sugar cravings without harming your immune system.

4. Wash your hands

Regular hand-washing throughout the day is probably something very few of us do. Washing the hands after using the bathroom is probably the limit for most people.

The spread of Coronavirus has now made us aware of the importance of washing our hands frequently to prevent the virus from entering our bodies or being passed on to others. Experts are telling us that next to social distance, regular hand-washing is vital to prevent the contraction of this virus.

In any case, washing your hands several times during the day or using a hand sanitizer is just a good health habit that should be part of any daily routine. A little soap and water can go a long way in preventing a long and uncomfortable illness.

5. Reduce stress

Stress hormones are major suppressors of the immune system. Constant stress not only drains you physically but also drains your immune system, putting you at risk of becoming ill more often.

Of course, we recognize that stress is an unavoidable part of life. But regular stress relief should also be a part of our daily lives. Allowing stress to build up is just harmful on so many levels. We've often noticed how we get sick after going through a major stress situation. It's not the stress itself that makes us ill, it's the weakening effect of stress on the immune system that makes us get sick more easily.

It's crucial that you adopt some form of stress relief into your lifestyle. This simply means making daily time to relax and engage in any activity that you enjoy. It could be anything from a warm bath to a long nature walk, meditation, or enjoying time with your family. Just make sure that you schedule a daily time to unwind and enjoy life.

6. Catch some sun

Sunlight is an excellent natural source of vitamin D, which also promotes immune system health. If you live in a sunny climate, count your blessings and make it a habit to catch some rejuvenating sun rays every day.

If your climate is not sunny, make sure to take advantage of sunny days and spend as much time outdoors as possible.

7. Drink plenty of water

This is another no-brainer but how many of us neglect to do this? Water keeps your body hydrated and flushes out toxins that can slow down immune system function. Ideally, we are recommended to drink eight glasses of water a day.

Conclusion

The immune system is a highly intricate and complex defense system that protects us from illness and disease. On the other hand, strengthening and maintaining this complex system is as simple as making a few diet and lifestyle changes. This is indeed a blessing to be grateful for.

Start making those changes today to nurture your amazing immune system and transform your health. Stock up on the seven immune-boosting superfoods and make the commitment to make them a daily part of your diet. They will not break the bank, as most of them are very affordable and accessible at your local market. They are tasty and so versatile that they can be incorporated into every meal, every day.

These seven superfoods alone will be enough to dramatically strengthen your immunity and bring amazing long-lasting change to your health and wellbeing. Incorporating the lifestyle hacks discussed here into your daily routine will further help you reap all the benefits of a super-charged, near-invincible immune system!

