



THE IMPORTANCE OF A HEALTHY IMMUNITY

Every day we encounter challenges to our health. They come in the form of bacteria, viruses, toxins, and environmental stress to name a few. In order to combat these invasions it's necessary for the body to have a balanced and healthy line of defense, in other words, a strong immune system. The immune system is the body's way of combating infectious organisms and other invaders. Through a series of steps called the immune response, the immune system attacks organisms and substances that invade or attempt to invade our inner territory. With an optimally functioning immune system, we keep the bad things out and disallow the development of problems and illness within.



A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM IS A HEALTHY LINE OF DEFENSE FOR THE BODY.

NUTRIENTS AND THE BODY'S DEFENSES

In order for the immune system to function at its best it must have access to nutrients. For this reason, individuals who are malnourished develop more infections than individuals who are well-nourished. Some of the effects of malnutrition on the body's immune system are a thinning of the skin with less connective tissue, weakness, poor wound healing, and a lack of defense against disease. So, an important key to health and longevity is a nutritionally well balanced diet and supplementation when necessary.

HERE IS A SMALL SAMPLING OF NUTRIENTS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO A HEALTHY FUNCTIONING IMMUNE SYSTEM:

- Vitamin A helps support immunity by playing a role in the development of helper cells.
- Vitamin A maintains healthy epithelial tissues to fight infection by preventing the invasion of bacteria and viruses.
- Vitamin C strengthens our resistance to infection.
- Vitamin E protects white and red blood cells, thus participating in the body's defenses against foreign material and disease.
- Iron helps fight infection.
- Magnesium supports normal functioning of the immune system.
- Manganese is a facilitator, with enzymes, of many cell processes.

Source: Understanding Nutrition, 7th Edition





HEALTHFUL BACTERIA PLUS VITAMINS AND MINERALS MAY HELP COMMON COLD

Researchers recently conducted a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study to investigate whether the consumption of a dietary supplement containing probiotic bacteria plus vitamins and minerals over a period of at least three months during winter and spring affects the length, frequency, and severity of symptoms of common cold infections as well as cellular immune parameters. The trial involved 477 healthy men and women who did not receive flu vaccines. The participants were randomly assigned to either the supplement group or a placebo group for three months. The final trial data showed that the intake of a dietary supplement containing probiotic bacteria plus vitamins and minerals during a period of at least three months during cold season may reduce the incidence and severity of common cold symptoms in otherwise healthy adults. For more information go to the *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, July 2005.

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MICRONUTRIENTS HELP WOMEN'S HEALTH AND IMMUNE FUNCTION ACCORDING TO REVIEW

In a 2001 review article appearing in the journal *Nutrition*, author Adrienne Bendich summarizes the role of a colleague who researched the impact of nutrition on women's health. Lawrence J. Machlin spent the bulk of his career elucidating the roles of nutrients in optimizing human health, including the support of research in the areas of women's health and immune function. His research found that several essential nutrients have been shown to affect women's health throughout the different stages of their life. One such nutrient is calcium. Calcium supplementation plays a role in significantly reducing physical and emotional issues relating to premenstrual syndrome. It also has a role in preventing osteoporosis. In addition, he found evidence that multivitamins and antioxidant micronutrients enhance many aspects of immune response such as lymphocyte-proliferative responses. To learn more about the health findings of Lawrence J. Machlin go to the journal *Nutrition*, October 2001.

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TIPS FOR A HEALTHY IMMUNE SYSTEM

- Make sure to get balanced nutrition every day
- Include lots of antioxidant-rich foods in your diet
- Decrease the intake of sugar in your diet
- Eat an adequate amount of protein every day
- Manage stress
- Drink plenty of water
- Participate in a balanced exercise program
- Get adequate rest