

Immune Support



The immune system is your body's primary mechanism of defense, responsible for protecting you from potentially harmful invaders, including viruses. Certain lifestyle interventions can support your immune function, including:

- Maintaining a balanced [healthy diet](#), which focuses on whole, unprocessed foods high in antioxidants
- Engaging in regular [physical activity](#)
- Getting adequate, good-quality [sleep](#); the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that adults sleep for seven or more hours per night
- Managing your stress, which may include counseling and relaxation techniques such as mindfulness and [meditation](#)

Additionally, the following evidence-based dietary supplement ingredients may provide immune support.



Astragalus (*Astragalus membranaceus*)

Astragalus is a botanical herb with anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anti-viral, and immunomodulating properties. While astragalus has traditionally been used in Chinese medicine to treat individuals with increased susceptibility to infections, studies suggest it may improve outcomes of inflammatory conditions and certain cancers. Research has also shown that astragalus may have anti-influenza virus properties.

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Probiotics

Probiotics are beneficial live microorganisms that may support immune health by modulating immune responses and inhibiting the growth of pathogens in the gastrointestinal tract. Probiotics may be obtained from fermented foods, including yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, unpasteurized pickled vegetables, and kombucha. Probiotic supplements may help protect healthy individuals against respiratory infections, reduce the severity of colds, and improve the efficacy of certain influenza vaccinations.

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Vitamin C

Vitamin C, found in dietary sources such as citrus, broccoli, and kiwi, plays an important role in immune function by supporting both innate and adaptive immune systems. Vitamin C deficiency may result in lowered immunity and a higher risk of infections. Supplementing with vitamin C has been shown to be effective in treating respiratory and systemic infections.

The Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) of vitamin C are:

- Birth to 6 months: 40 mg*
- Infants 7-12 months: 50 mg*
- Children 1-3 years: 15 mg
- Children 4-8 years: 25 mg
- Children 9-13 years: 45 mg
- Boys 14-18 years: 75 mg
- Girls 14-18 years: 65 mg
- Adult men: 90 mg
- Adult women: 75 mg

* Adequate Intake (AI)

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Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin required in mineral metabolism, bone health, and immune function. Research has demonstrated that individuals with vitamin D deficiency are at increased risk of contracting upper respiratory tract infections, such as the common cold, compared to individuals with normal vitamin D status. Further research suggests that vitamin D supplementation may support immune tolerance in autoimmune conditions and enhance the antimicrobial effect of certain immune cells.

The Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) of vitamin D are:

- Birth to 12 months: 400 IU
- Children 1-13 years: 600 IU
- Teens 14-18 years: 600 IU
- Adults 19-70 years: 600 IU
- Adults 71 years and older: 800 IU

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Zinc

The mineral zinc is commonly recommended to protect against the common cold. Zinc can be obtained in the diet from seafood, animal proteins, pumpkin seeds, yogurt, and cashews, as well as from dietary supplements. Research has found that zinc lozenges, when taken at the onset of a cold for a minimum of one to two weeks, may help reduce the symptoms and duration of colds in children and adults.

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