

# **20 SUPER FOODS TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM**





# INTRODUCTION

With the coronavirus pandemic in full swing you need to do everything that you can to boost your immune system so that you have the maximum protection. There are a number of ways that you can do this and one of the easiest is to change your diet so that you eat the right foods.

In this special report we will show you the very best foods to eat to give your immune system a boost. We will also provide other tips to help you protect your immune system and the food and beverages that you need to avoid as well.

Changing your diet is never an easy thing to do but your immune system is vital to your health and wellbeing and to fight against deadly viruses such as COVID-19. So always bear this in mind when you are tempted to revert back to your old eating habits.

We recommend that you introduce these foods into your diet gradually. It is a good idea to replace foods that do not support your immune system with these super foods so that you help your immune system to grow stronger. So let's get right into it shall we?

Before we reveal the 20 super foods that will boost your immune system there are some general guidelines that we want you to be aware of when it comes to your diet and consumption of foods and beverages.

## Choose Whole Plant Based Foods

Your immune system is constantly fighting against different harmful pathogens. It is an incredible system that works to protect you 24/7. You can help your immune system by providing it with the right antioxidants and nutrients from the food that you eat to be even more efficient.

This is where whole plant foods come into play. The following are rich in antioxidants and nutrients that your immune system needs to fight against infections and diseases:

- Fruits
- Legumes
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Vegetables

All of these food groups contain antioxidants which assist in the reducing of inflammation in your body. The antioxidants fight off free radicals which are unstable compounds that will result in inflammation if there is enough of them built up in your body.

It is essential that you help your immune system fight against this inflammation because chronic inflammation can result in health conditions that you must avoid such as certain cancers, Alzheimer's and heart disease.

The other good news about whole plant foods is that they contain fiber which will feed your gut microbiome. This is a collection of healthy bacteria contained in your gut. When your gut microbiome is in good shape it will increase your immunity and keep out pathogens from getting into your digestive tract.

## **You need Healthy Fats**

This is another largely misunderstood area. Healthy fats are good for you. Do not subscribe to the belief that all fats are bad because they are not. Healthy fats are required by your immune system to boost its response to harmful pathogens by reducing the amount of inflammation in your body.

An example of a healthy fat is olive oil. There have been studies that show the anti-inflammatory powers of olive oil and how it decreases the risk of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Also the anti-inflammatory properties of healthy fats can help your immune system fight against viruses and harmful bacteria.

You need healthy fats such as omega 3 because they are very anti-inflammatory. If you have chronic inflammation then this will significantly reduce the effectiveness of your immune system.

## **Go for Fermented Foods**

You should choose fermented foods in your diet because they have high levels of good bacteria called probiotics. These will populate your digestive tract and protect it. Examples of fermented foods are:

- Kefir
- Kimchi
- Natto
- Sauerkraut
- Yogurt

When you have a flourishing community of good gut bacteria it helps your immune system make the important distinction between healthy and normal cells and invader organisms that will cause you harm.

There was a study of 126 children conducted over 3 months where they drank fermented milk on a daily basis. The results showed that they experienced 20% less infectious childhood diseases.



In another 28 day study with 152 participants that had rhinovirus, it was discovered that those who took a probiotic supplement, Bifidobacterium animalis, induced a stronger response from their immune system and experienced lower levels of virus symptoms.

## **Keep away from Foods with added Sugars**

It is amazing the amount of food products available today that contain added sugars. There has been considerable research in this area which concluded that the consumption of foods that have added sugars or refined carbohydrates could contribute significantly to people becoming overweight and even obese.

If you are overweight or obese then this can reduce the effectiveness of your immune system. There was an observational study with around 1,000 participants where obese people were given the flu vaccine. These people were twice as likely to still contract the flu than people that were not obese and had been given the same vaccine.

When you reduce the amount of sugar that you consume you will help to reduce inflammation in your body and it will help you to lose excess weight as well. This will increase your resistance to chronic problems such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Both of these chronic diseases will weaken your immune system. So our advice is to limit your intake of sugar to less than 5% of your daily calorie intake. So if you are on a 2,000 calorie a day diet this would equate to limiting yourself to around 2 tablespoons of sugar.

## **Keep Hydrated**

It is very important to your overall health that you keep hydrated. If you are dehydrated this can provide a number of complications that will reduce your immunity against diseases:

- Reduce your heart and kidney function
- Impair your focus
- Cause headaches
- Impair your digestive system
- Reduce your physical performance
- Cause mood swings

When you are hydrated your urine will be a pale yellow color. The best liquid for hydration is water as it does not contain any sugars, additives or calories. You can drink teas and juices for hydration but we recommend that take these without sugar.

The rule of thumb is to drink when you are thirsty and stop drinking when you are not thirsty. Your thirst will increase if you sweat due to exercise or being in a hot climate. As we get older we lose some of the urge to drink because the thirst signal weakens. So you need to drink water regularly even if you are not thirsty when you are older.

So now we have got that out of the way it is time to look at the 20 super foods that you need in your diet to boost your immune system.

# BLUEBERRIES



1

Blueberries really are an immune system boosting super food. They are something that you can eat every day and are delicious so it should be easy for you to incorporate them into your diet. Why do blueberries work so well in boosting your immune system?

Well the answer is that they have excellent antioxidant properties. They contain anthocyanin which is a flavonoid that can really bolster your immune system. A study in 2016 concluded that flavonoids play a critical role in the defense of the respiratory tract.

Research studies revealed that people that had a diet that was rich in flavonoids were less likely to suffer from an infection of the respiratory tract such as the common cold than those that did not have a flavonoid rich diet. So be sure to add blueberries to your diet each day.

# CITRUS FRUITS

2

You may be already aware that vitamin C is very important for the production of white blood cells which are essential for fighting off infections. When a lot of people get a cold or the flu they increase their vitamin C intake. Getting more vitamin C will certainly help to boost your immune system.

Citrus fruits contain high levels of vitamin C. You will find the following popular citrus fruits to be a good source of vitamin C:

- Oranges
- Clementines
- Grapefruits
- Lemons
- Tangerines
- Limes

We do not produce vitamin C and we cannot store it so you need to consume foods that provide you with it each day. Citrus fruits are perfect for this as most of them contain high levels of vitamin C.

# BROCCOLI

3

There are few other super foods that have the mineral and vitamin power of broccoli. It is packed full of vitamins including A, C and E which is great for your immune system. Not only that but broccoli has a high fiber content as has many antioxidants that help to fight inflammation.

Broccoli is one of the best super foods that you can add to your diet today. To get the maximum benefit from broccoli it is best not to cook it and eat it raw. If you do want to cook it then just do this lightly.



# RED BELL PEPPERS

4

Most people think that citrus fruits contain the highest levels of vitamin C but this is not the case. Ounce for ounce, the red bell pepper contains twice the amount of vitamin C than any of the citrus fruits do.

The other great thing about red bell peppers is that they provide a rich source of beta carotene. So you have a super food that will not only help to bolster your immune system but with the beta carotene content it will keep your skin and eyes healthier as well.

# GARLIC

5

You may have heard many good things about garlic and it is likely that they are all true. It is used in cooking throughout the world because it provides dishes with a little extra zing. But more important than this is that garlic is very good for your health.

Garlic was used by ancient civilizations to ward off infections. It can also reduce blood pressure and dramatically slow down the hardening of arteries. Garlic has a heavy concentration of allicin as well as other sulfur based compounds which all help your immune system.

# SPINACH

6

Popeye was right on the money eating spinach every day. Not only is it another great source of vitamin C but it contains many powerful antioxidants as well as beta carotene. All of these things are very good news for your immune system.

Just as with broccoli, it is best not to cook spinach so that you retain all of the nutrients that it has to offer. If you want to cook it lightly then this is a good way of enhancing the amount of vitamin A and it will also allow the release of other nutrients from oxalic acid.

# GINGER

7

This is another famous super food that has a history of helping people when they get sick. Ginger is good for its anti-inflammatory properties and it is used a lot to help with the reduction of sore throats and other inflammatory illnesses too.

Ginger is pretty potent thanks to the gingerol it contains. Gingerol is related to capsaicin. By including ginger in your diet it can help to lower your cholesterol and it is also good for reducing chronic pain.

# YOGURT

8

What we are talking about here is yogurt that contains live and active cultures such as Greek yogurt. Always check the label to be sure of this. What these cultures do is stimulate your immune system to help you fight off dangerous diseases.

When you are looking for yogurt go for the plain types and avoid those that have added sugar and are pre-flavored. If you want to add some sweetness to plain yogurt then use healthy fruits to do this or use honey instead.

Natural yogurt is a good source of vitamin D and this is essential for regulating your immune system. Not only that but vitamin D is important for giving your immune system a boost so that it will protect you against diseases.



# GREEN TEA

9

Both black and green teas have high levels of flavonoids which are a type of antioxidant. Green tea is superior over black tea due to its higher levels of EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate) which is another powerful antioxidant.

Studies have shown that EGCG can enhance the functionality of the immune system. The reason that black tea does not have as much EGCG as green tea is because of the fermentation process that it goes through.

Green tea is not fermented but steamed which preserves its EGCG levels. You will find that green tea is also a good source of L-theanine which is an amino acid. L-theanine can improve the production of T cell germ fighting compounds in your immune system.

# TURMERIC

10

Turmeric is a very popular spice that is a key ingredient in a lot of curry dishes. But turmeric is not just a bright yellow colored, bitter spice. For many years turmeric has been used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.

Turmeric gets its unique coloring from the high levels of curcumin in it. There have been a number of research studies that show that curcumin can really help decrease muscle damage that is sports or exercise induced.

# ALMONDS

11

There is no doubt that vitamin C is boss when it comes to defending against viruses like the common cold. But to maintain a healthy immune system you need vitamin E. Vitamin E is a vitamin that is fat soluble which means that it demands the presence of fat to be properly absorbed.

Most nuts, certainly including almonds, contain high levels of vitamin E and also contain a number of healthy fats. If you were to consume a half a cup of almonds (around 45 shelled almonds whole), you would almost have your recommended daily intake of vitamin E.

# PAPAYAS

12

The papaya is a delicious fruit that is totally loaded with vitamin C. In fact a single papaya will provide more than 220% of the daily recommended vitamin C intake that you need. Not only that, but the papaya fruit contains papain, which is a powerful digestive enzyme known for its anti-inflammatory properties.

You will also find good amounts of potassium in papayas, as well as folate and B vitamins. All of these have a beneficial effect on your overall health.

# SUNFLOWER SEEDS

13

Another great immune system boosting super food is sunflower seeds. They are a great source of nutrients including vitamin B6, magnesium and phosphorous. Also you will find that sunflower seeds are high in vitamin E as well.

It is essential that you get your daily dose of vitamin E so that it will regulate your immune system functionality and maintain it.





# KIWI

14

This is another great fruit as it contains a number of essential nutrients including vitamin C, folate, vitamin K and potassium. Eat kiwis for vitamin C so that you can boost the performance of the white blood cells that your immune system produces to fight pathogens.

The other nutrients that exist in kiwi's will help to keep other parts of your body functioning correctly.

# CHICKEN AND OTHER POULTRY

15

When you were a child and got sick, did your parents or grandparents encourage you to drink chicken soup? Some people believe that this was for a placebo effect to make you feel better but there is more to it than that.

Chicken soup not only helps to improve cold symptoms but it will protect you from becoming sick in the first place. Both chicken and turkey contain high levels of vitamin B6. You will get around 40% to 50% of your recommended daily amount of vitamin B6 from just 3 ounces of these meats.

You need vitamin B6 because it plays an important role in many of the chemical reactions that take place in your body. It is also essential for the creation of healthy new red blood cells. When you make chicken soup from boiling chicken bones it contains chondroitin, gelatin and other nutrients that help your immune system and enhance gut health.

# SHELLFISH

16

Shellfish may not be top of your list when you are searching for super foods that will boost your immune system. But you will find that certain types of shellfish have a high zinc content.

Other minerals and vitamins usually command more attention than zinc, but it is vital for your body as it helps the cells in your immune system function as they should. The shellfish types that contain high levels of zinc include:

- Clams
- Mussels
- Lobster
- Crab

Although zinc is very important you do not want to exceed the daily recommended intake because this can actually prevent your immune system from functioning properly. So if you are a man you need 11 milligrams per day and if you are a woman then you need 8 milligrams.

# SWEET POTATOES

17

Not only do sweet potatoes taste good but they are loaded with beta carotene which is a powerful antioxidant. Beta carotene makes the skin of sweet potatoes orange in color and it will also keep your skin healthy and can protect it from harmful ultraviolet rays.

# OILY FISH

18

Another great source of healthy omega 3 fats is oily fish. Here we are talking about pilchards, tuna and salmon as well as other types of oily fish. In a 2014 health report it was suggested that the intake of omega 3 fatty acids on a long term basis reduced the risks of rheumatoid arthritis.



# KEFIR

19

If you do not know what kefir is it is a fermented drink that has live bacteria cultures which benefit your health. Research into kefir strongly suggests that it can help to boost the immune system. Studies show that it can:

- Increase antioxidant activity
- Fight bacteria
- Reduce inflammation

More studies are ongoing with kefir and the immune system but the results so far are very encouraging.

# DARK CHOCOLATE

20

This one may surprise you. Dark chocolate contains theobromine which is an antioxidant that can help to boost your immune system by providing protection of the cells from free radicals. As you are probably aware, dark chocolate contains saturated fat and is high in calories so be sure to eat it in moderation.



# CONCLUSION

So there you have it – 20 super foods that will help you to boost your immune system which is very important right now to provide the protection that you need from the coronavirus and other diseases. It is now over to you. Add these super foods into your diet and you will start to feel the benefits pretty quickly.