

Immunity Insiders

Nutritional Wisdom for your Immune System

Evidence-based resources

British Nutrition Foundation, British Dietetic Association “Food Facts”, Change 4 life resources



How to spot a nutrition myth

A nutrition “myth” is a statement about a particular food or type of foods that is not backed up by research

Focus solely on a specific nutrient

Create a pressure to buy something such as a supplement product

Nutrition myths may...

Have unrealistic claims or “sound too good to be true”

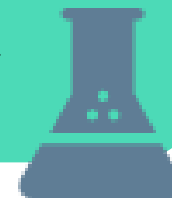
Demonise certain foods or suggest extreme restrictions

Can you “boost” your immunity?

Malnutrition is the most common cause of immune deficiencies worldwide. Nutrients help your immune system work as it normally should.

Whilst not having enough of some nutrients can make your immune system less effective, taking more than recommended won't increase your immunity above normal.

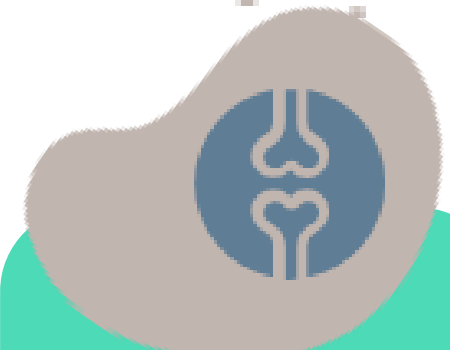
Taking the recommended amount of nutrients will simply help your immune system work as it should.



Would you want to “boost” your immunity

If your immune system is not properly regulated, it could lead to issues such as allergies or autoimmune diseases e.g. coeliac disease

So it's a good job we can't “boost” our immune system to make it stronger than necessary through food



Vitamin D

Myth

“Vitamin D cures COVID-19”

Fact

Whilst vitamin D does help our immune system to work effectively, the research shows little evidence that vitamin D is effective in treating COVID-19 or other respiratory (lung) infections.

However, vitamin D is known to be important in bone health

What can I do?

Most of our vitamin D is made from sunlight, but it can be found in foods such as oily fish, eggs and fortified breakfast cereal.

Getting enough vitamin D through diet alone is difficult. So, the government recommends all adults in the UK take a daily 10micrograms vitamin D supplement to support bone health. Those with paler skin should take this in the autumn and winter and those with darker skin take this all year round.

Supplements

Myth

“Multivitamins can replace a healthy diet”

Fact

Most people get all the multivitamins they need from a healthy balanced diet

Our diets are complex and provide many things that we can't get from multivitamins alone

What can I do?

Aiming to eat a healthy balanced diet in line with the Eatwell Guidelines should give you most of the vitamins, minerals and nutrients that your body needs. You can find more information by looking at the “Eatwell Guide” online.

Vitamin supplements can be used alongside a healthy diet if you feel you are not getting enough of a certain nutrient. For example, taking a vitamin D supplement in the winter

Vitamin C

Myth

“More vitamin C gives you more immunity”

Fact

Vitamin C is crucial to our immune systems working effectively and helps prevent cells being damaged. However, taking high doses of vitamin C won't give you any extra protection than the recommended dose. Any vitamin C consumed above the recommended amount will be removed in your urine

What can I do?

Adults aged 19 to 64 need 40mg of vitamin C a day. You should be able to get all the vitamin C you need from your daily diet.

Good sources of vitamin C include: citrus fruits (oranges and orange juice), peppers, strawberries, blackcurrants, broccoli and brussels sprouts

Vitamin C is not stored in the body so it's a good idea to eat some of these good sources everyday