



## Maintaining a Healthy Immune System While on Social Isolation

Building a healthy immune system is on everyone's minds these days. Uncertainty in these times can cause a great deal of mental and physical stress which can weaken your immune system. Here are several ways to help you support your immune system and stay well.

### HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

It is important to eat a balanced diet with healthy snacks; avoiding junk foods that are often high in sodium, fat or sugar. These can add physical stress on your body.

Give your immune system a boost by including seasonal fruits and vegetables that are rich in antioxidants: vitamin C and beta-carotene. Choose citrus fruits, cabbage, broccoli, pumpkin, sweet potato, and kale. To increase your immune fighting nutrients, make at least half your plate fruits and veggies (fresh, frozen, canned, dried) and include a rainbow of colors. Your overall diet should include lean proteins, whole grains and healthy fats like almonds, walnuts, olive oil, hummus and fatty fish.



### ACTIVITY

Exercise will help to relieve mental stress by releasing “feel good” hormones into your bloodstream. Physical activity further supports the immune system by reducing inflammation. Just a few minutes a day can help lower risk of infection. Many of us spend anywhere from 6-8 hours sitting. Not only does this negatively affect our posture, it can lower our immune function as well. Aim to stretch or take walk breaks every hour or as much as possible. Keep in mind that over exercising, exercising too intensely can adversely affect your immune system. Aim for 30 minutes of exercise a day.



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## MINDSET

Having a positive mindset will insure a more robust immune system. Try to adopt an “attitude of gratitude” where you identify the many things you are thankful for in your life. Try keeping a daily journal to focus on the things in your life that bring joy.

Fear and anxiety can also decrease our body’s immune fighting abilities. Use meditation, prayer or deep breathing exercises to help release any tension in your body and naturally support your body’s relaxation response.

Try downloading apps focusing on relaxing melodies or nature to help ease your fears or anxieties. This will further restore your immunity.

## HYDRATION

It is so important to stay hydrated, with water being your #1 go to beverage. Try adding citrus fruits like lemon, lime or oranges to further enhance your support. On average, aim to drink between 6-8 glasses of water every day. Try downloading a water tracking app if you struggle to take in enough water every day.



## ADEQUATE SLEEP

It is important to aim for at least 7-8 hours of sleep per night for a healthy immune system. While we sleep our bodies repair and restore essential body functions. To insure a good nights’ sleep, keep all electronic devices to a minimum at least 1-2 hours before going to bed. Avoid eating a heavy meal and strenuous exercise in the evening. Try meditation or a nice relaxing shower before bedtime to help you unwind.

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