



Keeping Well: Immune system

Your immune system is a complex network of cells, tissues, and organs that work together to defend against infections, viruses and diseases. It helps your body to recognise any 'invaders'. By boosting your immune system, you'll increase your chances of staying healthy during this period of uncertainty.

Here are a few tips on how to stay on top of your immune system:

A healthy and balanced diet: This is key to giving your immune system a boost and can help you feel your best. Try to have a healthy, balanced diet that includes the following: at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day; higher fibre starchy foods like potatoes, bread, rice or pasta; dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks); beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein; unsaturated oils and spreads, and eat them in small amounts; plenty of fluids (at least 6 to 8 glasses a day).

Vitamins and minerals: Combined with a healthy diet, including a moderate amount of vitamins and minerals will help your immune system perform to its capacity. Vitamin tablets should only be used if you cannot get the required amount through your foods.

Water: Stay hydrated! Drinking water on a regular basis especially helps during cold and flu seasons. Being hydrated will help your body naturally eliminate toxins and other bacteria that cause illness. Find out what your current intake looks like and if you need to increase it by using this [hydration calculator](#).

Sleep: Sleep plays an important role within immunity. Sleeping releases proteins called cytokines, which are needed to fight infection. However, too much sleep can lower your sleep quality and increase the probability of getting sick.

Exercise: Exercising regularly boosts blood flow, improving circulation of white blood cells which protect the body against disease. Your immune system reacts to exercise by producing more of these cells, and the rise in your body temperature helps fight infection. Heavier breathing also helps flush bacteria from the airway and lungs.

Stay strong, stay positive, stay healthy.