



You Can!

Strengthen Your Immune System



As Americans prepare to receive COVID-19 vaccines, it is a good time to reinforce the importance of nutrition, which is critical for immunity. It supports the body's ability to respond to an immune challenge, whether that challenge is exposure to a new virus or a new vaccine.

Vaccines may be less effective in stimulating an immune response in those who are undernourished. **Broccoli** is supercharged with vitamins and minerals and is one of the healthiest foods you can put on your plate. Here are some other priority **nutrients** for good immune health. Daily exercise and adequate sleep helps, too.

- **Vitamin A** is an antioxidant found in orange-colored fruits and vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes and cantaloupe.
- **Vitamin D** helps regulate the immune system and boosts the body's natural defenses against disease. Good sources include salmon, tuna, fortified milk, yogurt and sunshine.
- **Vitamin C** increases the production of white blood cells, which are key to fighting infections. Choose citrus fruits like oranges, lemons and limes as well as spinach, brussel sprouts, strawberries, papaya, kiwi and red bell pepper.
- **Vitamin E** regulates and maintains immune system function. Choose nuts and nut butters, sunflower seeds, avocados and dark leafy greens.
- **Protein** is essential for overall health and includes lean meat, low fat dairy, nuts, and legumes.
- **Zinc** is an important mineral found in seafood such as oysters or crabs, baked beans, yogurt and chickpeas.

Source: *Abbott Nutrition Health Institute; Healthline.com*

Medical nutrition therapy is available to Medicare-eligible participants with diabetes or non-dialysis chronic kidney disease. Call 888-222-6171 for information.

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