

Five Ways to Boost Your Immune System Naturally

Flu season is just around the corner, and now that the little ones are back in school, we're all thinking about ways to keep ourselves healthy so we don't come down with something at a bad time. Although, let's be honest, is it ever a good time for the flu?

Most people reach for the hand sanitizer and book a flu shot appointment. The best approach, however, to staying healthy is to strengthen your body's natural defenses against illness and do it year-round, so we are always ready, no matter when it hits! Here are the best ways to make sure that your body is ready to take on whatever microscopic nasties come your way:

1. Load up on the bone broth.

"A good broth will resurrect the dead," says an old South American proverb. Gelatinous bone broths boost the immune system, are rich in minerals, heal the gut, and are an all-in-one supplement for the hair, skin and nails. There's a reason Grandma made chicken soup to help you get better when you were sick. But this doesn't mean you should reach for Campbell's Chicken Soup, which is a highly processed "food" (if you can call it that), devoid of the healing benefits of homemade broth.

2. Get plenty of sleep.

If you want your immune system in tip-top shape, make sure it has the time it needs to rest and rebuild itself to help you fight off potential sickness. This means 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night ideally, though you should aim more towards 10 hours if you are managing an autoimmune disease or suffer from adrenal fatigue (which afflicts a high percentage of Americans).

Make sure to practice good sleep hygiene, including:

- Avoiding blue light exposure for at least an hour before bed (blue light inhibits melatonin production, without which you won't fall asleep). Two tricks to help limit your blue light exposure after dark are wearing blue blocker glasses and installing F.lux on your computer (a free software that automatically shifts your screen toward the orange end of the spectrum as the sun goes down, according to your latitude and the time of the year).
- Sleeping in a cool, quiet, completely darkened room, without blinking lights or distracting noises. Use ear plugs and an eye mask if necessary.

3. Meditate.

The bad news is, stress suppresses the immune system. The good news is, just a few minutes of meditation can put your body in a *parasympathetic* (i.e. "rest and digest") state, as opposed to the *sympathetic* ("fight or flight") state most of us are running around in day to day. With apps like Calm and Headspace, you can meditate anywhere, anytime, at different increments (5, 10, 15 minutes, etc). I suggest first thing in the morning, before meals, before you go to bed, or just whenever you are feeling particularly tense throughout the day.

4. Go easy on the sugar and alcohol.

These negatively affect blood sugar hormones and stress the body, suppressing the immune system. A whole food challenge like the Whole 30, 21 Day Sugar Detox, or the RESTART®

Program can help you get back on track and give your body a break from having to process sugar, thus allowing more effort to be devoted to immune activities.

5. Give your immune system an extra boost.

The following trio does wonders for the immune system; take these in conjunction year-round to ensure your body is always ready to fight infection:

- [Bio-Immunozyne Forte](#) (immune function support multi-vitamin)
- [NAC](#) (N-Acetyl-L-Cystiene)
- [Bio-D-Mulsion Forte](#) (2,000 IU per drop of vitamin D3)

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