

Everything you need to know each month from Optimal Health

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Natural Ways to Boost Your Immune System



It's hard to believe that this is our August Newsletter, making us feel that this has been the fastest summer ever! August in our household means back to school time – but even if you aren't sending kids back to school, many of us are out and about more, returning back to offices and doing more things that we haven't been doing for a bit. All of which leads to this month's topic: ***natural ways to boost your immune system***. We know a lot of these things are common sense (and easy to do!) but we feel like keeping them top of mind can help you stay healthy from whatever comes your way.

- The first thing, in our opinion, is the easiest and most obvious: **drink more water!** Sufficient hydration means blood is oxygenated, toxins will be flushed, and vital organs and muscles will function their best.
- Getting **Vitamin C & Zinc** through foods or supplements is essential to immune function.
 - **Vitamin C** is vital to tissue growth and repair, heart health, bones, teeth and cartilage. Vitamin C deficiency may increase the likelihood of infection, but taking an increased amount during a cold could reduce the duration. Our bodies do not produce Vitamin C on their own, so it's important to get it through fruits and veggies (citrus fruits, broccoli, or even half a cup of red pepper has 95 mg (106% of your recommended daily value!))
 - **Zinc** plays a very similar role to vitamin C in cellular repair and growth, as well as immune strength. Getting zinc into your diet—whether from meat, seeds, nuts, or whole grains—means boosting your body's ability to fight infection.
- While there are a lot of reason to **get more exercise**, immune boosting is another great reason to add it to the list. Although prolonged intense exercise can suppress your immune system, moderate exercise can give it a boost and may reduce inflammation and help your immune cells regenerate regularly. Try taking a brisk walk, steady bicycling, jogging, swimming, or light hiking. Most people should aim for at

least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week. Even better – get your exercise outside to give your body a break from the air circulated through air vents. Fresh air does your body wonders.

- **Sleep** is a regenerative process for your body. When you are sleep deprived your natural immune cells, or T cells, go down, and inflammatory cytokines (inflammation cells) go up. That means good sleep results in strengthening your immunity. Adults should aim to get 7 or more hours of sleep each night, while teens need 8–10 hours and younger children and infants up to 14 hours.

- **Probiotics** play an important role in balancing the gut biome and bacteria. Among their several health benefits (digestion, allergy reduction, heart health), these bacteria can support immune health by helping your immune cells differentiate between normal, healthy cells and harmful invader organisms. They appear naturally in sources like fermented dairy (yogurt) and food (kimchi, sourdough bread) or can be supplemented easily. Make probiotics a priority.

- **Nicotine** is an immunosuppressive in cigarette smoke and e-cigarettes. Negative effects of smoking include inflammation, increased cortisol levels, decreased T cells' response, and impaired immune response, making it more difficult to fight infection. As a rule of thumb, avoiding putting extra toxins in your body is always a good idea.

- **Alcohol** disrupts the microbiome, thus throwing off the balance of bacteria and leading to inflammation that could ultimately damage the liver. You actually give your body more work to do when you drink excessively, forcing it to focus its response on detoxification—to the detriment of immune system function. Your best bet is to practice moderation.

- Eat more **protein (and plants!)** as they provide the support your immune system needs. Also, if you increase your protein and plants, you'll have less time to eat sugar (which inhibits our immune-system response to bacteria when consumed in excess).

- A diet without enough **protein** could lead to a weaker immune system, making it harder for the body to fight off both bacterial and viral infections. The amino acids—aka the building blocks of life—that make up proteins stick around after digestion and help repair body tissue among carrying out countless other bodily functions.
- Whether it's carrots for beta carotene or broccoli for vitamin C, **plants** are filled with nutrition that helps to support a healthy immune system. To maximize the nutritional value of the plants you cook, try to avoid boiling the foods. Best bets are steaming, grilling, or roasting.

- ...and keep washing those hands!

Here's to a happy, healthy start to our fall season!

- *Dr Chris*



August Dates & Hours to Note



A Very Common Question!

August Dates & Hours to Note

As we're trying to squeeze the last few drops out of summer, we wanted to let you know that we will be out of the office on Wednesday, August 11th and Thursday, August 12th. We'll be back and ready to go Monday, August 16th! However, in order to fit everyone in, Dr. Chris will be adding an extra shift and in the office adjusting the morning of Tuesday, August 10th in addition to the usual afternoon shift.

The easiest way to schedule is to jump online and save your appointment time: <https://optimal-health-chiropractic.genbook.com> or call during business hours.

How Often Should You Get A Massage

We often are asked "How often should I get a massage?"

In our opinion, the answer is different for everyone and depends on things such as your goals for receiving massage, the type of massage you are getting and even your budget. You may need more frequent massages for pain relief, or you may find that less frequent but regularly scheduled massages for stress relief and emotional health are useful. But remember like many things such as getting in shape or eating healthier, one massage may not always undo damage done to your body over years and regular sessions may prove to be most helpful.

As always, your massage therapist will help figure out what's best for you and achieving your massage goals - just ask next time you are in for a session!

Schedule here: <https://www.messagebook.com/biz/OptimalHealthMassageTherapy>



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