Tips to Boost Your Immunity

e-book
It’s that time again, people around you are coughing, kids noses are running, the days are shorter and colder and the nights are so chilly that you need an extra blanket or two. It starts to feel like bugs are lurking around every corner, a reminder that you’ll need a strong immune system to fight off colds and flu and stay healthy over the winter.

Busy days, late nights, unhealthy eating and less exercise can deplete our energy and immunity and many of us could use some good solid support during the months ahead.

For most of us our busy schedules mean that staying in bed for a few days to get over a winter cold usually isn’t really an option. Though it might seem harder to stay healthy when the temperatures drop, there are a number of things you and your family can do to increase your chances of beating those winter sniffles.

In this e-book we are going to go through a number of handy hints and hot tips for boosting your immunity naturally through choosing immune enhancing foods and drinks, exercise and stretching tips, growing healthy herbs, natural supplements and much more.
Cold symptoms usually appear within the first day of coming in contact with the virus. They are generally at their worst around days two and three following exposure. Flu symptoms usually appear 24-72 hours after being infected and can come on abruptly. People with the flu can be infectious 24-48 hours before becoming unwell and for up to five days afterwards. The body responds to the presence of virus or bacteria by causing local inflammation and mucous in an attempt to trap and flush out the irritants. Fever is the body’s way of killing off bugs and producing an environment that prevents the replication of pathogens.

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<th>Common Cold Symptoms</th>
<th>Common Flu Symptoms</th>
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<td>Sneezing</td>
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<td>Mild headache</td>
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What is the main difference between a Cold and the Flu?
The common cold and flu are caused by different viruses, although they may share similar symptoms and it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. The main difference is that flu symptoms of fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense than with the common cold. Colds are usually milder than the flu, and people with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not lead to more serious health problems such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalisation.
• Wash and dry hands thoroughly periodically during the day. Cold and flu viruses are spread by direct contact and can be transmitted via a surface touched by someone who is ill and has sneezed into their hand.
• Carrying a hand sanitizer in your bag or car is a good idea at this time of year.
• Try to avoid touching your face when you’re in public places or around sick people.
• When possible, open windows to allow fresh air to circulate, and get outside into direct sunlight for a few minutes each day.
• At work and at home, regularly disinfect commonly used surfaces like keyboards, phones, doorknobs, counters, etc.
• Ensure the diet is high in fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and seeds, particularly pumpkin seeds (high in zinc), protein from lean meat, organic chicken and fish. Avoid fried foods, high sugar foods, junk food and fast food. More detail on diet tips in the next section.
• Start taking appropriate nutritional supplements just prior to winter.
• Avoid smoking and being around people who smoke, as it irritates the respiratory tract and reduces defence against viruses.
• Limit your alcohol consumption as it stresses the liver and dehydrates the body.
• Consistent, adequate sleep and regular exercise also contribute to a healthy immune system.
• Reduce stress by practicing relaxation techniques, exercising, or listening to music.
• Get plenty of regular exercise. Aerobic exercise speeds up the heart, increases breathing and oxygen transfer and stimulates sweating – all of which increases the body’s natural virus-killing cells. (See page 14 for more detail on exercise).
The key to a strong immune system, according to Dr Fuhrman (Author of New York Times best-selling book, *Super Immunity*), lies in micronutrients present in abundance in certain vegetables and fruit.

His advice is to eat an abundance of vegetables, especially green vegetables. Studies show that the compounds found in nuts and seeds, berries and pomegranates are potently protective. When these foods are combined with green vegetables, mushrooms and onions there is an immune boosting action fuelling our body’s self-healing and self-protective properties.

We recommend a diet high in green leafy vegetables, raspberries and blueberries, avocado, raw unsalted nuts and seeds and lean protein from free range chicken, fish and eggs. Avoid processed grains and choose brown rice, quinoa and buckwheat where possible for the higher nutrient content.

The idea is to take in maximum nutrient content per calorie, so avoid ‘empty calories’ such as white bread, white pasta, high fat and sugary foods that provide minimal, if any, nutrients.

**Take in LESS:**

**Simple sugars** Too much sugar suppresses the immune system, which can effect our ability to fight off colds, coughs, flu and other bacteria and viruses. Even just consuming 75 – 100 grams of sugar (about the same as 2 cans of soft drink) reduces the ability of white blood cells to overpower and destroy bacteria. But we all love that sweet taste! So don’t miss out, instead choose natural sugars in whole fruits, or try a natural sugar substitute such as Stevia or xylitol. Manuka honey, molasses, coconut and date sugars still contain sugar but are lower GI and supply extra nutrients than plain white sugar.

**Fried Foods and Processed foods** do not supply the nutrients needed to support a healthy immunity.

**Excessive caffeine intake** While moderate amounts of caffeine may be beneficial, excessive consumption of caffeine can disrupt the body’s immune response and causes stress to the nervous system and adrenal glands.

**Cured meats** most contain nitrates and other chemicals unfriendly to the body.

**Excess Alcohol** causes stress to the liver and nervous system and depletes the body of B vitamins important for the immune system.
Dr Fuhrman (mentioned above) advises the daily diet to include:

- A large salad with lettuce and other greens, tomatoes and raw vegetables, or ensure that both lunch and dinner include a large salad or a cooked green vegetable (and add mushrooms and onions to that vegetable most days).
- One serving of beans/legumes, preferably as a soup, with mushrooms and onions.
- At least three pieces of fresh fruit (particularly berries, pomegranate, cherries, plums, oranges).
- A handful of nuts and seeds.
- Large serving of green vegetables.
- Keep animal products to a minimum and avoid processed, cured or barbecued meats.

**DIET TIPS TO BOOST IMMUNITY**

**Take in MORE:**

**Water** the tendency can be to drink less water in the colder months and replace with hot drinks. The problem with this is that many hot drinks contain caffeine which is not good for the immune system in excess. If you don’t like cold water when it’s cold outside, add a touch of boiling water from the kettle until the temperature is palatable to you. Hot water with a cut piece of ginger is warming and also consider herbal teas. We have some warming winter hot drink recipes on page 12.

**Mushrooms** Mushrooms, especially Japanese mushrooms are a great immune booster full of antioxidants. Add to meals and salads.

**Green vegetables** especially kale, spinach, rocket, broccoli, cabbage, leeks and lettuce all support the liver to flush toxins and boost immune function. Plant protein comes packaged with fibre, antioxidants, and beneficial phytochemicals. They are rich in folate and other B group vitamins, vitamin K, calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron and carotenoids.

**Omega 3** Best source is salmon, vegetarian options include walnuts, flax seeds and chia seeds.

**Garlic** Raw garlic is antibacterial, antiviral, antioxidant and a great immune booster. It can be added to hot drinks (see drink section for ideas). Eating raw garlic can be a bit anti-social! Try chewing parsley afterwards to neutralise the odour or chose a capsule supplement instead.

**Onions** Onions are very high in quercetin, which has a mild antihistamine activity against allergies.

**Sweet Potatoes** Research has shown that a protein found in sweet potatoes may stimulate the production of white blood cells, possibly helping with immunity. They are also lower GI than regular white potatoes.

**Pomegranate** Pomegranates and pomegranate juice is packed with antioxidants, which help rid the body of free radicals. Drinking pomegranate juice can have a great impact on your health, by improving cardiovascular health, supporting the immune system and reducing inflammation.

**Pumpkin Seeds** Munch on these raw or add to salads for their Zinc content which is a well known immunity booster. Sunflower seeds, eggs, meat and fish also contain zinc.
Immune-Boosting Soup Recipe (serves 4)

Ingredients:
1 red onion, finely chopped
1 red or green chilli, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 inch piece of grated ginger
2 medium sweet potatoes, diced, skins left on
1 cup chopped mushrooms
2 Tbsps pomegranate seeds or goji berries
MSG-free vegetable stock, to cover
salt and pepper to taste
Large sprig parsley, roughly chopped

Instructions: Place onion, chilli, garlic, and ginger in a large pan with the olive oil. Water-sauté over medium-high heat for about 5 minutes, until the onion softens. Add the sweet potatoes and mushrooms along with the pomegranate or goji berries. Stir well, then add enough vegetable stock to cover all the ingredients. Simmer well for 10 to 15 minutes, until the sweet potato is soft then add with salt and pepper to taste. Blend into a smooth soup consistency. Add chopped fresh parsley to serve.

Healthy Green Vege Stir Fry

1 Tbsp olive oil (or if you prefer to water sauté, 2 Tbsps water)
1 onion, sliced
2 carrots, sliced
1-2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 inch piece ginger, finely chopped
2 red capsicums, seeds removed, sliced
125 g kale, sliced finely
125 g snow peas
200 g broccoli
1 tablespoon sweet chilli sauce
1 teaspoon sesame oil (optional)
1 cup raw cashews

Instructions: Heat oil in wok or non-stick frypan and stir-fry onion, ginger, garlic and carrot over high heat, (or add water and water sauté) 2 to 3 minutes. Add capsicum, kale, broccoli and snow peas and stir-fry until just tender. Stir in sweet chilli sauce and sprinkle with sesame oil. Scatter with cashews and serve with steamed brown rice.

Note: you can add tofu or meat, simply cook through separately and add once veges are done and stir through. Tofu can be baked if you prefer to avoid oil.
In this section we will provide you some great immune boosting drink recipes, both hot and cold. First let’s consider a well debated subject regarding whether juices or smoothies are preferable.

**Freshly Squeezed Juice vs Blended Smoothie – What’s Better?**

Both Fresh juices and smoothies are an efficient way to consume much needed fruits and vegies and get a strong hit of nutrients for a low calorie intake. Let’s look at the pros and cons of each.

**Juices**

**Pros**

Juicing extracts most of the vitamins and minerals from whole pieces of fruits or vegetables, so is an efficient way to take in many nutrients, especially when using a ‘cold press’ juicer that retains the live enzymes. Some argue that without the fibre the body doesn’t have to work as hard to break down the food and absorb the nutrients which may be especially helpful for those with sensitive or weak digestion. Freshly squeezed juices generally form part of most cleansing and detoxifying programmes because they are so nutrient rich.

**Cons**

Juicing removes the fibre (pulp) and can often be high GI unless mostly vegetables are used. Because of the lack of fibre this can cause a sharp rise in blood sugar levels as body absorbs the fructose (fruit sugar) more rapidly without the fibre. Frequent consumption of freshly squeezed fruit juices is not recommended, and particularly not recommended for people with hypoglycaemia and diabetes. Also, commonly used centrifugal juicing machines create heat that destroys some nutrients. Lack of fibre in juices is less filling, so often people get hungry again more quickly.

**Smoothies**

**Pros**

Contain fibre, which most of us need more of. Fibre is not only helpful to the digestive tract helping keep us regular and binding to toxins and cholesterol but also contributes to a feeling of fullness that helps prevent people from overeating – a common culprit for weight gain. The presence of the fibre in smoothies helps create a slow, even release of nutrients into the blood stream and avoids blood sugar spikes. Because smoothies tend to be more filling and generally faster to make than juice, they can be great to drink first thing in the morning as your breakfast, or for snacks throughout the day.

**Cons**

Additional ingredients are often tossed into smoothies including high fat dairy milk and/or yoghurt, nuts, muesli and protein powders containing preservatives and additives that may cause a rise in chemical and calorie intake. Keep smoothies as ‘clean’ as possible using only fruits, vegetables and non-dairy milks.
Immunity-Booster Juices
Vitamin A is known as an anti-infective, and having a deficiency in it may impair immunity and increase the risk of infectious disease. Vitamin C is a potent antioxidant that’s important for the protection of immune cells and also of enhanced immune function.

VEGE delight
Ingredients:
1 Lemon
2 cm slice of ginger, peeled
3 medium carrots, peeled
4 stalks of celery
4 kiwi fruit, peeled
A handful of parsley
Instructions: Feed all ingredients through juicer and serve.

BEET the Bugs
Ingredients:
1 ½ large or 3 small beetroots, peeled
2 apples, chopped
1 orange, peeled
½ inch piece of ginger, peeled
juice of ½ lemon
Instructions: Feed all ingredients through juicer except the lemon juice. Mix in the lemon juice and serve immediately. If the beet taste is too strong for you, dilute with water to taste.
SMOOTHIE RECIPES

Immune Kick Start Smoothie
Ingredients: (serves 1-2)
1 medium banana
1/2 - 1 cup frozen blueberries
3 pitted dates
1/2 cup pomegranate juice
1/2 cup almond milk
1 cup baby spinach
1 cup firmly packed green vegetable (chose from bok choy, kale, silverbeet etc.)

Instructions: Blend ingredients until smooth. Note: the dates can make it very sweet, so if you prefer a less sweet smoothie reduce to 1 or 2 or leave out all together.

Berry Healthy Breakfast
Ingredients: (serves 1-2)
1 cup frozen unsweetened raspberries
¾ cup chilled unsweetened almond or rice milk
1 ½ Tbsp honey
2 tsp grated fresh ginger
1 tsp ground flaxseed
2 tsp fresh lemon juice

Instructions: Combine all ingredients in blender, adding lemon juice to taste. Puree until smooth.

As health enhancing as juices and smoothies are, they are sometimes not as appealing in the colder months, so next we have some warmer immune boosters for you.
3 Hot Drinks To Boost Immunity

Simple antioxidant packed hot drinks to boost immunity and help fight colds and flu including pomegranate juice, citrus, ginger, green and black tea, cayenne and cinnamon are a few ingredients. Here are four delicious drink recipes that incorporate one or more of these powerful cold-fighting foods.

Ginger Spiced Tea

Ginger is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory and has been shown to have soothing effects on cold symptoms. Green tea is also rich in antioxidants and help keep the immune system in top fighting shape. Use non-dairy formulas for immunity boosting, as dairy tends to increase mucous production. If you’d rather a caffeine free blend, leave the green tea out.

Ingredients: (serves 2)
3 cups filtered water
1-1/2 inch piece fresh ginger, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon green tea leaves
1/2 cup non-dairy milk eg. rice, almond or soy
2 tablespoons honey
Dash of cinnamon

Instructions: Bring water to a boil, add ginger and let simmer for 10 minutes. Lower heat, add tea leaves and let steep for 10 minutes. Strain contents then return to heat adding milk and honey and warm over low heat. Serve topped with a dash of cinnamon.

Lemon, Honey & Cayenne Tea

Cayenne pepper naturally does what many cold medicines try to do. It effectively breaks up mucus and helps clear your respiratory passages, giving you quicker relief from cold symptoms. It also has immune strengthening and antimicrobial properties, making it a great food to consume to help prevent a cold from even coming on.

Ingredients: (serves 2)
1 cup water
1 clove of garlic – chopped
1 teaspoon honey
Pinch cayenne pepper

Instructions: Place garlic and cayenne into cup, pour in boiling water then stir in the honey. Leave to steep for 3-5 mins, you can then drink either strained or unstrained (you can even chew the pieces of garlic if you’re game!).
Apple Cider Pomegranate Toddy

Pomegranates, which are in season during the winter months, are one of the most powerful known sources of antioxidants. Combine with apple cider and comforting spices for a tasty immune strengthening beverage.

Ingredients: (serves 4)
2 cups apple cider  
(if using double strength, halve this and increase water)  
1 cup water  
1 cup pomegranate juice  
3 cinnamon sticks  
4 cloves

Instructions: Heat all ingredients in a saucepan and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove cloves and cinnamon sticks and serve.
Exercise strengthens the immune system by increasing the production of white blood cells that helps to fight off colds and flu, so the cooler months are no excuse not to exercise, in fact it’s more important we do so. Exercise also boosts feelings of well-being, helping you stay positive, and even boosts drained energy back up by increasing the brain’s feel-good chemicals.

Protect Yourself From Getting Sick

According to a study from North Carolina in the US, people who exercised at least five days a week had 43 percent fewer days with a cold during autumn and winter than those who exercised less often. That’s because during exercise and for three hours afterward, your body steps up the production of important germ-fighting cells called neutrophils. “Every time you work out, you’re protecting yourself against getting sick,” says study author David Nieman.

Whilst it might require that little bit extra willpower we need to embrace the cold weather and even rug up and exercise outdoors like they do in the US and the UK. If you really do struggle pulling on your gear when it’s dark and cold outside, go for a walk or jog during your lunch break, or go to a gym class.

The Golden Rule with Exercise and Fitness

The golden rule here is finding something you really enjoy doing. If you don’t like an exercise regime the first, second or tenth time – chances are it’s not for you. Don’t drag yourself out for that run if you hate running. Don’t join a gym if you prefer the great outdoors.

Try a few different things until you feel motivated to do something because you enjoy it and actually look forward to doing it (yes it IS possible!), that way you’ll reach your fitness goals faster and with less stress. Get on the phone and online to find out what’s on in your area, consider all options including outdoor fitness, individual fitness, gym group exercise classes and team sports. Some examples include spin/RPM, pump, tennis, squash, Oz tag, basketball, dance, pilates, yoga, Zumba, Sh’Bam, boot camp, swimming, aqua aerobics, core training, weight training . . . in fact you’re spoiled for choice!

Indoor weight training

If you can, build weight training into your fitness routine. Weight training is something that can easily be done indoors during cold wet weather. It can also help to strengthen bones and muscles while helping to maintain a healthy body weight. Weight training doesn’t have to be high impact or high weight, more repetitions at a lower weight is better for toning rather than bulking up.
**Lounge Room Workout**

The good news is you don’t necessarily need to go to a gym to get great weight-bearing exercise. Here are 5 examples of using body weight for training and toning, which can be done anywhere, anytime without equipment. Go online and search for dozens more.

**Triceps Dip:** Get seated near a step or bench. Sit on the floor with knees slightly bent, and grab the edge of the elevated surface and straighten the arms. Bend them to a 90-degree angle, and straighten again while the heels push towards the floor. For some extra fire, reach the right arm out while lifting the left leg.

**L Seat:** Seated with the legs extended and feet flexed, place the hands on the floor and slightly round the torso. Then, lift the hips off the ground, hold for five seconds and release. Repeat!

**Bicycle:** Lie down with knees bent and hands behind the head. With the knees in toward the chest, bring the right elbow towards the left knee as the right leg straightens. Continue alternating sides.

**Standard Push-Up:** With hands shoulder-width apart, and feet at hip distance tighten the core, bend the elbows until the chest reaches the ground, and then push back up. Keep the elbows close to the body. Repeat as many reps as possible. Rest and repeat.

**Step-Up:** Find a step or bench, and place the right foot on the elevated surface. Step up until the right leg is straight then return to start. Repeat, aiming for 10-12 reps on each side. The higher the step and the faster the pace the better the workout.

**Beat your Chest to Beat the Bugs**

‘Thumping your thymus’ is a method of gently tapping on the thymus gland to create vibrations that stimulate an increase in the maturation and release of white blood cells.

The thymus gland sits behind your sternum, or breastbone. It is part of the lymphatic immune system and is responsible for maturing infection-fighting white blood cells (T cells) made in our bone marrow.

Use fingertips or side of fist and tap up and down around the sternum area for 15 seconds, repeat daily and increase to 3-4 times daily when subjected to illness (yours or anothers).
Yoga and breathing techniques can help relax the nervous system and boost the immune response. Both have been shown to directly impact the health of the immune system. Yoga postures that open the chest and throat are good for stimulating the thymus, and inversion poses can help improve the flow of lymph and immune cells through the body. Twisting poses and hip openers can help to activate the secondary organs of the immune system, including the spleen and the lymph nodes. Modified versions of forward bends, backbends can also lend a hand in supporting and strengthening the body’s natural defenses.

There are some great smart phone apps with guided yoga sessions, many of them free. This is something simple you can do at home for 15-20 minutes.

Here are a few basic yoga poses to inspire you, hold each for between 30 seconds and 1 minute, breathing deeply.

**Shoulderstand**
Lie on your back, lift your legs to vertical, supporting your midback with your hands and keeping your upper arms and elbows parallel to each other.

**Bridge Pose**
Lie on the floor, bend your knees and place your feet flat on the ground hip width apart directly under your knees. Press your palms down into the floor beside your hips. Slowly lift the hips and lower back off the floor. Press your shoulder blades firmly into the back linking hands together under the torso.

**Downward-Facing Dog Pose**
From hands and knees with the wrists underneath the shoulders and the knees underneath the hips, press your hands into the floor, tuck your toes under, and lift your hips up and back towards the ceiling straightening the legs. Extend through your inner arms while pressing the tops of your thigh bones firmly back and press heels towards the ground.

**Warrior Pose**
Stand tall with your feet together and arms by your sides. Separate your feet 4 to 4.5 feet apart and raise your arms out to your sides, shoulder height, with your palms facing down. As you exhale, turn your left foot and leg perpendicular bending your knee to a right angle keep your knee centred over the middle of your foot to protect the joint. Right foot slightly turned out. Look out over your left hand keeping your arms strong, shoulder pressing down. Hold for 3 to 10 slow, deep breaths and repeat on the other side.

Hint: Protect your knees by making sure your bent knee is directly above your ankle and the thigh is parallel to the ground. This not only protects from knee strain, it also strengthens the muscles around the knee joint.

**Child Pose**
Sit down with lower legs tucked underneath you, keep your knees at hip width, hands resting on either side of the body. Inhale deeply and then exhaling, bend your body forward, allowing the head to rest on the floor or a mat. Stretch your hands out to the back, palms facing towards the ceiling, resting arms on the floor and abdomen on the thighs. (Note, you can place a rolled up blanket or other support between calves and thighs if this position is uncomfortable for you).
In this section we’re happy to supply you tips for growing nutritious plants that add high density vitamins and minerals to any meal and support your immunity throughout the year. If you have limited room or live in an apartment, all the below plants can be grown in pots, the kale will need a larger pot or rectangular planter pot.

Kale
**Benefits:** Full of vitamins and minerals, kale is one of the most nutritious greens you can grow and eat.

**Growing tips:** Plant kale as seedlings in autumn or propagate from seed in late summer. It requires a moist, rich soil containing plenty of fertilizer and compost. If growing from seedlings plant them deeply, up to the first leaves, to establish a strong, stable plant. Plant kale in an open sunny position.

**How to take:** Kale is tastier and more palatable when you remove the dense stalk in the middle and just use the softer leaves. Add finely chopped to salads, and use in cooked recipes as you would silverbeet. Can also be added to green smoothies for a knockout nutrition hit!

Lemon Thyme
**Benefits:** Thyme has long been known as an expectorant, which makes coughs more productive (that is, it helps clear out your lungs faster so you feel better sooner).

**Growing tips:** Lemon thyme has a height and spread of about 30 cm. It will grow well in a sunny position in well-drained soil.

**How to take:** You can brew a lemon thyme herbal tea by steeping 2 teaspoons of freshly chopped thyme in a cup of boiling-hot water for 5 minutes. A few sprigs of lemon thyme will give a tasty, zesty twist to your salads and meals.

Mint
**Benefits:** Fresh Mint is high in antioxidants contains iron, fiber, vitamin A and potassium.

**Growing tips:** Mint prefers a moist patch of soil, so its spread is usually curtailed when the plant runs out of moisture. Mint also does quite well in light shade and tends to shrivel in full sun. Once you’ve conquered ordinary mint, branch out into some of the more interesting scented mints such as lemon, ginger and applemint.
How to take: Mint tea is delicious, with a dash of honey or on its own. Simply steep a bunch of leaves in hot water for 5 mins. Freshly chopped raw mint leaves are delicious when added to coleslaw or any other salad. They also go well in plain yoghurt with (or without) grated cucumber as an accompaniment to curries.

Gotu Kola

Benefits: Reduces inflammation in the body, alkalising and supporting the immune system.

Growing tips: Gotu kola is a very easy herb to grow, preferring to just do it’s own thing with no help from you at all. Gotu kola is a lovely slender herb with fan shaped leaves and occasionally small white flowers. It prefers some shade but will grow in full sun if necessary. Once planted, Gotu kola will spread and continually renew itself, year after year.

How to take: You can eat the leaves raw fresh every day in salads or straight off the plant, the taste is grassy and refreshing.

Parsley

Benefits: This little herb packs a serious nutrient punch. High in vitamin C, A, K, iron, folate and with reasonable amounts of calcium, magnesium and zinc.

Growing tips: You can buy parsley in punnets or small pots, but it is also extremely easy (and cheap) to grow from seed. If you have reasonable soil that holds moisture, just make a small hole and sprinkle in some seeds. Grow in the full sun. Parsley shoots in three to four weeks, and lasts many months before going to seed (up to a year).

How to take: Add to salads, omelettes, scrambled eggs, stir fries. Tabbouleh is a popular recipe based on parsley.

Add chopped fresh herbs to the dinner table every night for people to add to any part of their food. The bonus with these little health foods is they are tasty as well as healthy.
**Smile and Laugh!**

The wonderful thing about letting out a hearty laugh is that it decreases the amount of stress hormones in the body while increasing a type of white blood cell that fights infection. Watching a comedy reduces your stress hormones whilst your endorphins rise! Laughing and smiling – whether artificial or real – makes your body think it is happy and can in effect, boost your mood and immune system! Everyone wants to be happy, so do yourself a favour and promote a healthier body by wearing a smile.

**Meditate or Relaxation Techniques**

If stress suppresses the immune system, then anything that reduces stress boost your body’s ability to heal itself! Lowering levels of cortisol in the blood can improve sleep, and boost the immune system; this can easily be achieved by meditation or other relaxation techniques. Meditation need not be intimidating – just relax and strive to quiet your mind for 5-15 minutes a day. Other possibilities include listening to a guided meditation tape, focus on all the positives in your life, or just watch your thoughts and practice ‘letting go’.

**Surround Yourself with Loved Ones**

Having strong relationships has been proven to boost your physical and mental health – and improve the immune system. Several studies support the idea that people who feel connected to friends – whether a small or large group – have a stronger immunity than those who feel alone.

**Sleep In**

Fatigue increases your susceptibility to illness. A lab experiment at the University of Chicago proved this by limiting test subjects’ sleep to four hours and then giving them a flu vaccine; their immune systems only produced half the normal number of antibodies. Like stress, insomnia can cause a rise in inflammation – and similarly an increase in cortisol. Clearly a great way to boost your immune system is to get 7-9 hours of sleep every night.
**Echinacea**

Echinacea is native to North America, and for many years has been used to help treat and prevent the common cold.

According to the largest ever study, taking Echinacea three times daily for four months reduces the number of colds and the duration of colds and flu by an average of 26%.

And for those prone to recurrent colds these are reduced by 60%. Research also found it reduces the amount of paracetamol patients need to take when they are ill.

**Olive Leaf**

Olive Leaf has been used for a range of health concerns such as viral infections, shingles, cold and flu. It is recognised in the complementary and alternative medicine industry as ‘nature’s own wide spectrum antibiotic’.

**Blooms Echinacea Complex** is a combination of Echinacea purpurea, Echinacea angustifolia, Astragalus and Olive leaf to help fight against lurking cold and flu viruses.

**Vitamin C**

Fads in natural health come and go, but good old vitamin C has been used to support immunity for over 80 years since it was officially discovered in the 1930s. And for good reason.

Vitamin C is an ‘essential’ nutrient, which means the human body does not produce it and needs a dietary source. This fact was highlighted when thousands of sailor’s lives were affected by the dreaded disease ‘scurvy’ in the 1700s due to a dietary lack of vitamin C.

Vitamin C or ascorbic acid is a water-soluble vitamin, meaning that the body doesn’t store it in large doses so it is even more important to consume vitamin C daily, as it gets rid of allergens, irritants and viral infections. Good food sources include capsicum, oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, papaya, broccoli, tomatoes, sweet potato, kiwi fruit and spinach. However supplementation is often advisable to reach a good, therapeutic dose for maximum immune protection.

**Blooms Natural Vitamin C Powder** 150g contains non-synthetic, 100% natural whole food source of vitamin C, great for adults and children simply add to food, drinks or your favourite smoothie recipe.

**Zinc**

Zinc has become well known for its importance in the male reproductive tract and its support of prostate health, however zinc has many functions in the body including being important for the maintenance of a healthy immune system, tissue repair and wound healing.

Zinc deficiency has risen in recent years as, soil content can be quite depleted due to modern day farming practices, so often supplementation is recommended. There is a lack of zinc in many people’s diet, as zinc is destroyed in the grain milling process and is also lost in cooking.

Food sources of zinc include oysters, shellfish, meat, eggs, whole grains, nuts and seeds. Pumpkin seeds are an especially good source.
When zinc levels are low, the body’s senses of smell and taste can suffer leading to a craving for strong tasting foods, including junk foods which can lead to a vicious cycle. **Blooms Zinc Max 50** is a high strength, once a day zinc supplement that is beneficial for development and proper functioning of the immune system.

**Elderberry**

Dark purple in colour, elderberries contain the flavonoids quercetin and rutin, anthocyanins and vitamins A and C. Elderberry is an antioxidant and antiviral that helps support healthy immunity. Elderberry has fast gained a following especially during the winter months for its ability to help protect against and reduce the duration and severity of the symptoms of colds, flu and mild upper respiratory tract infections. In a 2004 randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study in Norway it was found that the symptoms of flu were relieved on average four days earlier than those of the control group.

**Astragalus**

Astragalus membranaceus has been used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) for thousands of years. It was often combined with other herbs to strengthen the body against disease. Astragalus has immunostimulant, antioxidant and antiviral properties and has become one of the most popular of the traditional Chinese Medicinal herbs now used to support immunity. It has both a general stimulant effect on the immune system, and specific antiviral activity which helps protect against winter colds, coughs and flus. Astragalus is effective taken as a single herb, but when in a formula with other immune supportive herbs can cover a wider range of symptoms. Astragalus is in the Blooms ViralGuard formula for both immunity maintenance AND for use in acute conditions.

**Rehmannia**

Sometimes known as ‘Chinese Foxglove’, Rehmannia is a Chinese herb traditionally used for its nourishing and strengthening effect on the liver, kidney and heart. Rehmannia is used for fevers and feverish conditions and works well in combination with other immune supporting nutrients. **Blooms ViralGuard** contains a high dose of 4000 mg (4 grams) of Elderberry in every capsule plus Astragalus, Rehmannia, vitamin C and zinc. Blooms ViralGuard has antiviral actions to help defend against colds and flu and inhibits the replication of cold and flu viruses. The formula provides symptomatic relief from upper respiratory tract infections, helps reduce aches and fevers and may reduce the severity and duration of colds.
Garlic
Is world renowned for its immune boosting properties as both a medicinal herb and a food. Garlic has antimicrobial activity to help fight off the bugs which can cause colds and flu and also aids in the relief of congestion and sinus symptoms.
Garlic is one of the few herbs that can be found across the 3 major traditional healing systems in the world - Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Traditional European Medicine.

Horseradish
Is a root vegetable that belongs to the brassica family of vegetables that includes turnips, kale, broccoli, cabbage and mustard. When used as a medicinal herb, horseradish root has antimicrobial activity and can increase blood flow to the mucous membranes and help reduce inflammation of the respiratory tract.

Marshmallow
Most people other than herbalists tend to associate the word ‘marshmallow’ with a soft white or pink sweet that goes gooey on a stick over the campfire.
The marshmallow ingredient in Blooms Sinus and Congestion Relief formula is from the root of the marshmallow plant, completely different from the sweet of the same name. Both the root and the leaf of the marshmallow plant contain a substance known as mucilage polysaccharides. This ‘mucilagenous’ component of the polysaccharides creates a wonderful soothing action of marshmallow root which acts to coat the mucous membranes in the respiratory tract, helping to relieve irritation.

Cinnamon Bark
In Traditional Chinese Medicine, cinnamon is believed to improve energy, vitality, and circulation. When used as a medicinal herb cinnamon has a warming effect on the body and is used for conditions caused by coldness. The warming effect occurs particularly in the upper part of the body making it perfect for inclusion in the Blooms Sinus and Congestion formula.
Blooms Sinus and Congestion Relief helps support immune function and may help maintain the health of the airways against the effects of allergens, viral infections and irritants. Blooms Sinus and Congestion Relief may also help ease the symptoms of allergies and hayfever, including sneezing, congestion and runny nose.
WHO ARE WE?

Blooms Health Products

Blooms Health Products has a long history in the Australian wellness industry. Henry Bloom opened one of Australia’s first health food stores in 1936 and pioneered such innovative health contributions as yogurt culture, wheat grass and iodine supplements that are now commonplace. The Blooms Health Products brand launched in 1947 and has flourished into the comprehensive natural supplement range available today.

100% Australian Owned Family Company

We are 100% Aussie owned, proudly providing jobs to Australians for over 65 years and manufacturing on-site in Sydney. We’re a family-owned company with a big heart and enthusiastic approach to natural health. We strive to maintain excellence through all that we do, from the uncompromising quality of our raw ingredients and innovative formulas, the rigorous testing of our products to the friendly care and support we give customers and retailers.

Confused about our name?

There are a few ‘Blooms’ around, we are not a chemist, florist or clothing store! We make only natural supplements. Watch the 1 minute video that explains all! www.bloomshealth.com.au

Blooms vision for better value, innovative health

Since those early days Blooms Health Products has continued to focus on the health and wellbeing of Australians by ensuring our products are backed by clinical research, traditional evidence and scientific validation. The Blooms Health Products team prides itself on staying in tune with what Australian people want and need, constantly reviewing and seeking out innovations that can provide people with effective and affordable health solutions.

Blooms, packaging and the environment

At Phytologic we are very aware of our connection to the environment, and always seek to operate in a sustainable way through optimising resource efficiency and reducing our overall environmental impact. Phytologic Pty Ltd is proud to be a signatory of the Australian Packaging Convenient (APC). The APC is a sustainable packaging initiative, which aims to create more sustainable packaging, increase recycling rates and reduce packaging litter. All our packaging is 100% recyclable.
Thank you for downloading our Winter Wellness e-book we hope you found some of the information useful and enjoyable to read. If you would like to view our full range of health products you can visit our website or purchase through a number of our trusted online sellers, which are listed below. Here’s to a happy, healthy winter!

- vitaminKing.com.au
- City Health
- DVE Discount Vitamins
- Brighter Choice
- PHARMACY DIRECT
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