



# IMMUNITY EXPLAINED

Plus 5 ways to naturally  
strengthen your immune  
system

If you're like me then getting through 2020 felt like a life or death Triathlon without any previous training and now, almost a quarter of the way through 2021, you're still recovering. When the dust settles after a life changing event, there comes a time for reflection and introspection. What did we learn? How did we grow? What changes will we make moving forward?

At the peak of the pandemic last year, all throughout social media, I saw posts either asking for remedies to prevent getting COVID-19 or posts touting remedies to "boost your immune system". As a toxicologist, I was bothered by some of these posts advertising quick fixes to guard against the virus.

In actuality, immunity is very complex and no one thing, quick fix or immunity shots, will ever provide a comprehensive solution to boosting immunity. So what is immunity, exactly? Your immunity is your immune system's way of protecting your body against infectious diseases. **There are three types of immunity: Innate, Passive and Adaptive.** Innate immunity is your body's first response/protection against something foreign entering the body. Innate immunity includes your natural barriers like skin and mucous membranes that try to keep nasty bugs out. Passive Immunity gives immediate protection but is short-lived and lasts usually only up to a few months. Passive Immunity is when someone is given the antibodies and did not create them in their own body. An example is when a baby receives his/her mother's antibodies via breast milk or the placenta. Adaptive Immunity is usually the strongest and can last your entire lifetime. This type of immunity comes from you actually getting the disease or being vaccinated against it. Adaptive immunity involves an intricate network of specialized immune cells and antibodies that attack and destroy foreign and unknown invaders(germs) and can prevent future infections by the same invaders since they now know what they look like.

When you think about immune boosting or immune supporting practices and remedies, the adaptive immunity is what is being referred to. So what are some ways that we can help these specialized immune cells do their jobs more effectively and efficiently?

## 1. Get enough sleep

The average adult should aim to get approximately 7 hours of sleep daily. Studies have shown that lack of sleep can increase your chances of getting sick.

## 2. Eating a plant-based diet

Don't freak out! This doesn't mean you should be a vegan or a vegetarian. Making sure that whole plant foods like fruits, nuts, vegetables, legumes and seeds are part of your daily diet helps to fight off diseases. Plant-based foods contain antioxidants that fight free radicals to decrease inflammation in the body. Also the fiber in your fruits and vegetables feed the healthy gut bacteria that stop pathogens from entering your digestive tract.

## 3. Limit your "added sugar" intake

Excess sugar and refined carbs can lead to obesity, which absolutely weakens the immune system.

## 4. Get more active

Moderate exercise like walking, jogging, swimming, cycling and yoga for 30 minutes daily helps your immune cells regenerate regularly.

## 5. Healthy supplements

Studies have shown that certain supplements including Vitamin C, Zinc, Elderberry, Echinacea, and Garlic can help to strengthen your body's general immune system.



As you can see, there is no one quick fix for immunity. Supporting and strengthening your immune system requires certain lifestyle commitments, but there is no formula or algorithm for "boosting your immune system". Examine your own lifestyle and make small adjustments like committing to getting more sleep or daily walks. Don't stress yourself out because stress is an immune system killer!

Love more

Laugh more

Live more

**Disclaimer: No supplement, diet, or lifestyle modification — aside from physical distancing, also known as social distancing, and practicing proper hygiene — can protect you from developing COVID-19.**



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