

Winter Nutrition

Winter is fast approaching, so this is the best time to improve your dietary intake to ensure you are ready to stand up to the cold temperatures without succumbing to colds, flu and other bugs that are known to compromise the immune system during the winter months.

Here is some nutritional information designed to help you do just that:

Boosting Immunity

The immune system is the key to fighting every kind of affront to the body so getting all the nutrients you need to support immune function is a crucial key to good health:

Possible underlying causes of reduced immunity:

- Excessive exercise
- Inadequate rest
- Chronic stress
- Nutritional deficiencies including zinc, selenium, vitamins A, C and E
- Elevated levels of toxins inc. toxic metals, pesticides, organic solvents, drugs
- Intestinal dysbiosis including chronic candidiasis
- Hormone dysfunction including hypothyroidism

Nutritional Support for the immune system:

Vitamin A

A deficiency can result in increased susceptibility to infections because it is required for proper mucosal health and the production of several types of white blood cells.

Vitamin A: Food Sources

Liver, butter, cheese, eggs. Beta-carotene: sweet potato, carrots, dried apricots, buckwheat, dark green vegetables

Vitamin C

A deficiency can result in seriously depressed white cell function and reduction of cellular immunity and decreased local inflammation.

Vitamin C: Food Sources

Citrus fruits, blackcurrants, gooseberries, guava, kiwi, lychees, paw-paw, raspberries, parsley, spinach, green beans, peas, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, peppers, spring greens and watercress

Vitamin E

This is necessary for the proper functioning of lymphocytes (a type of white blood cell that helps the body to fight infection)

Vitamin E: Food Sources

Wheat germ oil, nuts and seeds, fish, eggs, avocados, green vegetables

Selenium and Zinc

Both of these minerals are anti-viral and are needed for proper immunity. Deficiencies will reduce white blood cell activity.

Zinc: Food Sources

Quorn, peas, tofu, chickpeas, prawns, squid, chicken, turkey, lean red meat, white fish, oatcakes, oats, brown rice, quinoa, buckwheat noodles, pine nuts, cashew nuts, pumpkin seeds, crab, lobster and sardines

Selenium: Food Sources

Mushrooms, mung beans, kidney beans, green lentils, brown lentils, hummus, black eye beans, shrimp, prawns, lobster, crab, sardines, mackerel, broccoli, kidney, trout, herring, lemon sole, plaice, cod, brown rice, onions, tomatoes, brazil nuts, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds and cashews

Garlic

Garlic has strong anti-viral properties and well-demonstrated immune enhancing abilities. Try incorporating it as much as possible into cooked dishes and salad dressings.

Coughs and Colds

When you've been hit with a cold it's crucial to nourish your body so that you can recover quickly and then stay well. This is the time to listen to what your body is telling you: slow down, rest, and eat.

Cold Busting tips:

- Keep your fluid intake up. With a cold you may find it difficult to breathe, so you might want to try some soothing herbal teas such as a lemon and ginger (either fresh root ginger slices and lemon juice or a teabag) rather than trying to swallow your way through two litres of water a day.
- Ensure you get your five or more servings of fresh fruit and vegetable each day. To get a good range of phytonutrients aim for as many different colours as possible – this will supply your body with other immune system boosters such as selenium.
- Have plenty of citrus fruits which are rich in vitamin C and beta carotene, both of which are immune boosters.
- If the thought of eating so much fruit isn't appealing, then the easier option is drinking plenty of freshly squeezed juice
- Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and brussel sprouts are crammed with antioxidants and phytonutrients. To preserve as much of the goodness as possible, aim to serve them lightly steamed or steam-fried (in a covered wok with a little liquid).
- Eat plenty of onions and garlic, eggs, soya, quinoa and nuts. These foods contain cysteine, an amino acid that directly affects the immune system. Cysteine is converted by the body into glutathione; an antioxidant that protects us from toxins. Glutathione performs vital functions for your immune system: it is needed for macrophage immune cells to make the chemicals they need to kill invaders, as well as for lymphocyte production and for red blood cell membranes.
- Some bacteria that invade the body can be very difficult to shift, so taking antibiotics may be the only way to avoid developing a more serious health problem. If you have to take antibiotics, it is a good idea to restore the balance by taking probiotic bacteria as well. Either have a small pot of live yoghurt that contains acidophilus, lactobacillus or bifidus daily or take a probiotic supplement.

To find out more or to book a nutrition appointment for a personalised nutrition plan please contact our reception on **08447 700 800** or **reception.city@puresportsmed.com**