

A HEALTHY IMMUNE SYSTEM

JUNE 6, 2021

During this time of the Covid 19 pandemic; people are more concerned than ever about the health of their immune system. We are aware of the importance of having a healthy immune system to ward off infections and diseases in our bodies.

What does the immune system do for our bodies?

The immune system plays a vital role in protecting our bodies from harmful substances, germs, and cell changes that could make you ill. It is made up of various organs, cells and proteins.

As long as the immune system is running smoothly we don't notice it, but if it is not working properly or becomes weakened and can't fight off aggressive germs...you get ill.

The major task of your immune system is to:

- Fight disease causing germs (pathogens) like bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi
- Recognize and neutralize harmful substances from the environment
- Fight disease causing changes in the body such as cancer cells.

Factors that contribute to a weaken immune system:

- Unhealthy Lifestyle ex. (poor diet, lack of: adequate sleep/rest/exercise.
- Old age
- Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption
- Chronic diseases, obesity, crowded living conditions
- Chemo therapy or other immune suppressing treatments

We see it is important to have a healthy and strong immune system. With the arrival of the Covid 19 virus we have seen a plethora of products that advertise ways to boost and strengthen the immune system. Most are just designed to get you to spend money on **unnecessary products**. A strong and healthy immune system most often comes from a healthy lifestyle. It is true that some people have inherently stronger immune systems, but **lifestyle** has been shown to have the greatest impact.

Lifestyle Habits that support a strong and healthy immune system.

- Adequate rest/sleep, and hydration with clean water instead of sodas
- A diet rich in green vegetables, fresh fruits, and healthy fats. Try to purchase organic fresh vegetables and fruits when at all possible in order to avoid pesticides. (in another article we will look at ways to remove pesticides) If you are on a doctor prescribed diet; **please follow the diet you have been given by your provider.**)

- Daily (minimum 5 days) exercise of at least 30-45 minutes. Such as walking, swimming, or aerobic exercises. **Consult your doctor before beginning an exercise program**
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Manage stress. Develop strategies to cope with stressful situations. Ex. (prayer, hobbies)
- Avoid smoking, drugs, alcohol
- Avoid contact (when at all possible) with known sources of infections, viruses, fungi, and environmental pollutants.
- Wearing a face mask and frequent handwashing will help lower exposure when contact is necessary.
- Follow your provider recommended vaccine protocol and routine physical examinations

Important warning:

Avoid taking **mega** vitamins or mineral concoctions in an effort to boost your immune system. This can actually **cause more** health problems. If you eat a healthy diet, you should be getting the necessary nutrients your body needs. However, if for various reasons your diet is not adequate; let your **doctor** recommend a vitamin/mineral supplementation for you

God gave us an immune system to help protect our bodies from disease. Let us strive to live in a manner to keep it healthy and functioning as He intended.

Information Resources: [NCBI NIH.gov/how the immune system works](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/how-the-immune-system-works/)
[Health.Harvard.edu/how to boost your immune system.](https://www.health.harvard.edu/how-to-boost-your-immune-system/)

Submitted by Gloria Elliott, RN BSN