



HealthBits

11 Foods to Help Boost Immunity

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Research shows that what you eat, or don't eat, can play an important role in your immune system's ability to do battle with incoming germs.

With cold & flu season here, read on to see whether your fridge & pantry are stocked with these power foods...

- 1) **OJ** – 1 cup supplies more than 100% of your daily vitamin C requirement. Best known for its skin & immunity benefits, vitamin C won't prevent colds, but studies show that consuming enough can help you recover faster, especially for people with low levels.
- 2) **Oats & Barley** – These grains contain beta-glucan, a type of fiber with antimicrobial & antioxidant capabilities more potent than Echinacea, reports a Norwegian study. This compound boosts immunity, speeds wound healing & may help antibiotics work better.
- 3) **Milk** – Fortified dairy is one of the best sources of Vitamin D—a power nutrient that may effectively boost immunity & help prevent colds, a Harvard study shows. Adequate amounts of D help produce cathelicidin, a protein with virus-killing qualities. It is difficult to get enough D from diet & sunlight alone, so it's best to take a supplement to attain optimal levels. Aim for at least 1,000 IU daily.
- 4) **Yogurt** – Probiotics, or the “live cultures” found in yogurt, are healthy bacteria that keep the gut & intestinal tract free of disease-causing germs. Some yogurts also contain Lactobacillus reuteri, a specific probiotic that appears to stimulate infection-fighting white blood cells. Look for yogurt that has a “Live and Active Cultures” seal.
- 5) **Fish & shellfish** – Salmon, mackerel, herring, & other fatty fish contain omega-3 fatty acids, which increase activity of phagocytes—cells that fight flu by eating up bacteria. They also contain selenium, which helps white blood cells produce cytokines—proteins that help clear viruses.
- 6) **Chicken soup** – Cysteine, an amino acid released from chicken during cooking, has a chemical structure similar to acetylcysteine, a drug for bronchitis. The soup thins mucus & calms the symptoms of a stuffed-up nose & cough. Added spices, such as garlic & onions, can also increase the soup's immune-boosting power.
- 7) **Garlic** – Garlic contains infection-fighting compounds, including allicin, a potent bacteria fighter.
- 8) **Wheat germ** – One quarter cup of wheat germ packs nearly half of your day's requirement for zinc, and essential mineral that helps repair cells & strengthens the immune system. Sprinkle it on your cereal, yogurt, oatmeal, or add to smoothies.
- 9) **Pumpkin & sweet potatoes** – These foods are rich in vitamin A, which plays a key role in preventing & fighting off infections.
- 10) **Black & Green tea** – These teas can help boost your immune system's T cells, which produce interferon, a protein that battles cold & flu infections.

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TIP: Flu-proof your life

When was the last time you wiped down your desk or disinfected your phone? About 41% of office workers say they rarely or never disinfect their desks, according to a new survey from Clorox in consultation with Corporate Wellness, Inc.

That's despite the fact that two-thirds of people say they eat lunch at their desks at least twice a week. If your unclean desk harbors germs, you can pick them up (and get sick) while shuffling papers or answering the phone, especially when

11) **Mushrooms** – Mushrooms contain more than 300 compounds that rev up immunity, in part by escalating the production of infection-fighting white blood cells & making them more aggressive. Use shiitake, maitake, reishi or button mushrooms.

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