



Supporting Your Immune System

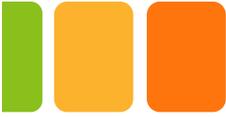
What YOU can do to protect yourself and your family





What Can I Do to Support My Immune System?

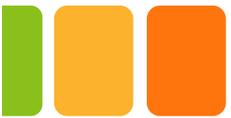
- What helps
- Gut health
- Do I need to take extra vitamin or mineral supplements?



What Helps:

- **Eating a balanced diet** – every part of your body, including your immune system, works better when you eat a healthy diet supplying plenty of the nutrients your body needs to function at it's best.
- **Sleep** - Give yourself every opportunity to sleep well. Without proper sleep your body may make less of a type of protein that targets infection. Check out this link for help.
- <https://sleepcouncil.org.uk/advice-support/sleep-advice/sleep-hygiene/>
- **Exercise** – exercise increases the activity of helpful immune cells – try to do at least half an hour a day.





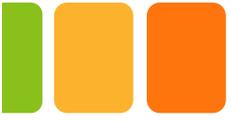
Gut Health

- Our gastrointestinal tract – often referred to as our ‘gut’, is home to **TRILLIONS** of different microbes (helpful bacteria).
- In fact, we have more microbes than we do human cells!
- This collection of microbes is called the microbiome.
- These microbes **help to defend us from infection** and disease.
- A healthy and diverse microbiome is associated with better health and immunity.
- One of the best things you can do to support your microbiome and therefore your immunity is to eat a varied diet with plenty of vegetables, fruit, wholegrains and ‘live’ foods like yoghurt and kefir.



Find Out More

- For more information on a balanced diet and foods that provide nutrients thought to be important for the immune system to work normally check out the following link <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/helpingyoueatwell.html>



Should I Buy a Vitamin or Mineral Supplement?

- Whilst it's true that there are many nutrients that are important for the immune system to work normally, you should be able to get these from a healthy, balanced diet; with the exception of Vitamin D
- Vitamin D contributes to the normal functioning of the immune system.
- The body creates vitamin D from direct sunlight on the skin when outdoors.
- The Department of Health recommends that if you aren't often outdoors you should take a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D.



Vitamins continued

- So whilst vitamin and mineral supplements can help if you're deficient in something specific; for most of us, if you're eating a healthy balanced diet; staying active; getting fresh air whenever possible and trying to sleep well, then you are doing everything you need to support your immune system.