

KEEP YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM STRONG!

Everyone's immune system is different. Some people never seem to get infections, while others seem to be sick all the time. While some people are fortunate to have a naturally strong immune system, there are things you can do to help strengthen your immune system:



1 EAT FOODS TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM that are rich in antioxidants like vitamins C and E, carotenoids (building blocks of vitamin A), and omega-3 fatty acids. Choose deeply colored produce like peppers, broccoli,

carrots, leafy green veggies, tomatoes, and citrus fruits; nuts, fatty fish like tuna, salmon or sardines; and whole grains.

2 STAY HYDRATED. Not only does it help flush toxins from the body, but staying well hydrated keeps the mucus membranes in the nose and respiratory system moist and more resistant to germs, and helps thin excess mucus if you do get sick. Thirst is not an indicator of dehydration. Drink lots of fluids: water, juice, milk, or soup - fruits and vegetables count too!

3 EXERCISE. Regular moderate exercise, like brisk walking, can boost the immune system's antibody and T cell responses. Make sure everyone in the family gets at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week. Can't find 30 minutes? Ten minutes of activity at a time is fine as long as those 10 minute sessions add up to a total of 30 minutes by the end of the day.



4 GET ENOUGH REST. Chronic lack of sleep affects your whole body, including the immune system. Children need 9-11 hours, adolescents need about 9 hours, and adults need 7-9 hours of sleep a night. Full schedules make it easy to be sleep deprived, so establish a healthy bedtime for everyone in the family.



5 CONTROL STRESS. While some situations are a real crisis, it's the day-to-day events that are often the most overwhelming and stressful. Everyone has daily stress ... the key is how you deal with it!

1. Set limits and priorities.
2. Be willing to delegate tasks when others offer their help.
3. Create a support system.
4. Laugh!

6 WASH YOUR HANDS after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, using the bathroom, touching pets, playing outdoors, when caring for someone who's sick, and before preparing or eating food. Use plenty of soap and water, and remember to lather up for a full 20 seconds. You can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

7 KEEP IMMUNIZATIONS UP-TO-DATE. Vaccines help your immune system identify a disease's presence - and destroy it - before it has a chance to multiply inside your body and cause illness. Check with your health care provider about an annual flu shot, and whether anyone (children and adults) in your family is due for a "booster" shot for other vaccinations. Ask about the pneumonia vaccine.

WEST WINDSOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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