

Eat well to feel well.

A balanced diet can help you feel your best – inside and out. Eating the right foods will lower the risk of major illnesses, improve your mood and increase your energy to help you keep active.

Can I boost my immunity through food?

Unfortunately, there's no specific food or supplement that will protect you from germs or from catching a virus. Good hygiene practices remain the best means of avoiding infection.

However, if we do catch a virus, our immune system is responsible for fighting it. Research does suggest that improving nutrition can help support optimal immune function, which is critical to help us stay healthy and feeling our best.

Essential nutrients and where to find them

The good news is that following common-sense dietary advice is enough to keep your immune system in good shape; no expensive supplements or difficult to source superfoods required.

Simply focusing on eating a variety of foods within each of the main food groups will boost your intake of key vitamins and minerals. Vitamin D is the only exception – as it is largely produced in the skin, in response to sun exposure. To ensure a healthy vitamin D status, adults and children over the age of one should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of Vitamin D if they struggle to get adequate sun exposure year round. Most people need just a few minutes outdoors most days.



The kitchen essentials listed below will help you incorporate the nutrients you need into your day-to-day diet.

Vitamin A

Oily fish, egg yolks, cheese, tofu, nuts, seeds, beans, pulses and wholegrains

B Vitamins

Meat, fish, dairy, nuts, fortified soya milk, breads & green leafy vegetables

Vitamin C

Oranges, lemons, limes, berries, kiwi fruit, broccoli, tomatoes and peppers

Vitamin E

Nuts, green leafy vegetables and vegetable oils

Iron

Meat and fish, beans, pulses, legumes, wholegrains and dried fruits

Zinc

Oysters and other seafood, meat, chicken, dried beans and nuts

Things to limit

Sugar: It can be tempting to comfort yourself with sugary foods during times of stress, but regular consumption can lead to fluctuations in blood sugar levels that further increase sweet cravings and contribute to drops in mood and energy levels. Instead of sugary treats, try to opt for complex carbohydrates such as oatcakes with a banana or apple with peanut butter, for a more prolonged release of energy throughout the day. This will help support you to make better choices all day long.

Caffeine: It's a stimulant that inhibits our ability to recognise feelings of tiredness. High intakes can also heighten blood pressure and worsen both anxiety and insomnia. Alternate caffeinated drinks with caffeine-free alternatives such as squash, herbal teas, hot water with ginger or decaf varieties to support your mental state and promote a good night's sleep.

Alcohol: Try to be conscious of your alcohol intake. Alcohol can act as a depressant, which can exacerbate symptoms of poor mental health such as anxiety and lack of motivation. Excessive alcohol may also impair immune system function.

Whilst the occasional glass of wine in moderation is unlikely to have a lasting negative impact, be sure not to exceed 14 units per week, which is the equivalent of:

- 14 single measures of spirits
- 7 pints of lager
- 7 medium (175ml glasses of wine)

Advice
from expert
nutritionists.

All our customers* have access to the Aviva Smart Health Nutrition Consultation service.

Consultations with expert nutritionists are available free of charge via phone or video call. During the call, you can ask the specialists any questions you have about nutrition and dietary habits. They'll provide you with a personalised plan, including meal plans and weekly menus, all to help and support you in reaching your nutritional goals.



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