

# Patient Help Sheet

## Boost Your Immune System

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"Cure sometimes, treat often, comfort always." -Hippocrates

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## 7 Ways to Boost Your Immune System

**Y**our immune system is what keeps you healthy and helps you ward off pathogens like the flu or a cold. Most of us don't spend a lot of time worrying about our immune system until we're sick. Then we reach for the over-the-counter medications to help relieve our symptoms. But the fact of the matter is that we can take control of our immune systems naturally. There are many ways to boost the immune system. Let's explore some of the options available.

### 1 Don't smoke.

Smoking lessens the body's immune system and actually makes you more susceptible to infections. Smoking destroys antioxidants in the body. Antioxidants fight off free radicals. When the body is overcome by free radicals, the immune system becomes compromised and diseases can develop. If quitting smoking is a goal, look into acupuncture treatments. Acupuncture helps thousands of people quit smoking every year and it can help you too.

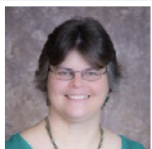
### 2 Eat a well-balanced diet.

The immune system functions best when it has the proper building blocks. Proper nutrition keeps the cells in the body healthy and allows the immune system to do its job effectively. Micronutrients like zinc, iron, copper and selenium are vital for the immune system to function. When these nutrients are missing, disease may develop. Micronutrients are found in abundance in vegetables and fruits. This is why it is recommended to eat at least five to seven servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Also including probiotics in the diet is extremely beneficial. The link between a healthy gastrointestinal tract and the immune system is undeniable. Daily ingestion of fermented foods like yogurt, sauerkraut, kimchi and kefir have been shown to improve the overall health of the gastrointestinal tract. And when the gut is healthy, the immune system functions better.

### 3 Manage stress.

Emotions were once thought to be of no consequence on the body's health. But now it is becoming more evident that emotions can play a huge role in how the body functions, including the immune system. When the body is stressed, disease can occur. So finding ways to manage stress are very beneficial to the body. Meditation is just one way stress can be managed and it takes little time or money to accomplish. As little

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as 10 minutes per day can boost the immune system and keep the body healthy.



### 4 Exercise regularly.

Just as eating a well-balanced diet can keep the body functioning properly, so can regular exercise. Exercise promotes healthy circulation, which can then allow the immune cells to do their job more efficiently.

### 5 Do some deep breathing.

Deep breathing is a very old tradition thought to have been around for thousands of years and tightly associated with yoga and meditation. Deep breathing, also known as diaphragmatic breathing is very simple to do and it is believed to actually help control the body's sympathetic nervous system. This is the system that partially controls the immune response within the body.

### 6 Take in some sunlight.

Sunlight provides vitamin D. When vitamin D is insufficient, respiratory infections can take hold and they are much harder to get rid of. Just 10 to 15 minutes of sunlight, without sunscreen, is enough for most people. During the winter months though, artificial light may be necessary to get the needed exposure.

### 7 Get acupuncture treatments.

Acupuncture has been around for thousands of years and it is a wonderful way to boost the immune system. There are several acupuncture points that help boost the immune system. One in particular is along the large intestine channel. The point is large intestine 11. It is located at the outer end of the elbow crease, when the arm is flexed. Acupuncturists use this point frequently when a person comes in with an illness because large intestine 11 is a great immune-boosting point.

As stated, there are many ways to naturally boost the immune system. The examples given are just a few.

**No matter what though,** make sure to take care of the immune system before getting sick and it will ultimately take care of you in return.