



# 8 Tips to Boost Your Immune System

You might be sabotaging your immune system without even knowing it. Many common lifestyle habits can have a negative effect on the health of your immune system.

*A poor immune system can leave you more vulnerable to illnesses like the common cold, the flu, viruses, and even contribute to the development of cancer and other serious diseases.*

Replacing bad habits with healthy habits can bolster the strength and effectiveness of your immune system.

**Consider where you could implement healthier, immune-boosting habits:**

1. **Exercise.** Moderate exercise of only 30 minutes a day increases several factors in the immune system. The most important of these is your leukocyte count. These are the cells that fight infection.
  - *Sitting at a desk all day increases the odds of catching common ailments.* Go to the gym or get out and take a brisk walk every day.
2. **Avoid being overweight.** Excess bodyweight greatly increases the likelihood of developing diseases like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Studies have also shown that being overweight has a negative impact on the immune system.

3. **Watch your diet.** Excess sugar consumption has a negative effect on immune system's effectiveness when dealing with bacteria. This effect can be seen after the consumption of as little as 75 grams of sugar and continues for at least a few hours.
  - On the other hand, *foods that are high in antioxidants and other nutrients boost the immune system.* The best way to get all of these nutrients is by eating fruits and vegetables. Ideally, fill at least half your plate with vegetables.
4. **Reduce stress.** We're all faced with a certain amount of stress in our lives. A small amount of stress is actually good for our health. However, excessive, chronic stress has a very negative impact on immune system health.
  - *Have you ever noticed you only get sick when you're overstressed?* When you're stressed, you become much more likely to develop a variety of illnesses.
5. **Laugh.** Laughing is great for you. It decreases the level of stress hormones in your body. It also increases a specific type of white blood cell. Even the anticipation of experiencing something humorous has a very positive effect on the immune system.
6. **Avoid social isolation.** A strong social network is a great boost to both your mental and physical health. Your immune system is especially affected. Even when social distancing is at times necessary to avoid the spread of viruses, remaining in contact with family and friends is important.
  - *Those with strong social connections and many close friends have a higher level of immunity than those that feel socially isolated.*
  - The feeling of loneliness can actually affect the way genes behave.
7. **Get enough sleep.** Most adults require 7 to 9 hours of sleep to maintain good health. A lack of sleep can increase the likelihood of getting sick.
  - Insomnia can increase inflammation in the body, which inhibits your immune system's responsiveness.
8. **Practice relaxation techniques.** Since chronic stress decreases immune system function, learning relaxation techniques will help return your immune system to healthy state.
  - *Experiments have shown that regular meditation has a positive impact on your immune system.*

Boosting your immune system is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It has a significant impact on longevity. Consider how many people die from the flu and other common ailments, especially as they age and their immune system function decreases.

You'll also notice that these tips will enhance your overall well-being, as well as helping your immune system. *Eating better, sleeping more, exercising, and relaxing will make you feel better every day.* You're going to like the way you feel!