



## **Fighting COVID Before It Starts.**

Since 2020, you've heard a lot about COVID-19 and how to avoid the virus. For example, wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands minimize your exposure and viral spread. However, did you know that boosting your immune system can make your body less vulnerable to colds, flus and viruses? Here are some tips for helping your system naturally fight off COVID and other illnesses.

**Improve your gut health.** Since 80% of your immune system lives in your gut microbiome, keep your gut healthy with a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, especially leafy greens, onions, garlic, and berries. To populate your gut with good bacteria, add fermented foods like yogurt, kefir and sauerkraut, and take a daily probiotic. Turmeric, ginger and cinnamon help aid digestion, while certain mushrooms and herbs including elderberry, oregano, rosemary and sage have antiviral properties.

**Add immune-boosting supplements.** Fortify your immune system with **Vitamin C**, a powerful antioxidant that helps fight inflammation, protects cells from harmful free radicals, and stimulates white blood cell production. **Vitamin D3** not only strengthens bones, but helps regulate insulin levels, metabolism, heart function, and the immune system itself. The essential mineral Zinc destroys viruses and stimulates antibodies. For better absorption, pair **Zinc** with **Quercetin**, an antioxidant with potent antihistamine and anti-inflammatory properties. Belue Farms Natural Market nutritional specialists can help you determine which products are ideal for your needs.

**Sanitize shared surfaces.** Many of the things we touch daily harbor germs and viruses that can live up to 3 days! Using an antibacterial or alcohol-based cleaner, wipe shared surfaces frequently, including doorknobs, handles, cell phones, remote controls, keyboards, and devices such as tablets.

**Get plenty of sleep.** Sleep lets your body and cells repair, so make sure to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep every night. To improve your sleep, avoid sugar, caffeine, and alcohol in the evening, and power-off electronic devices at least an hour before bedtime.

**Moisturize your sinuses.** Just like skin, sinuses get dry in winter. To keep them moist, use a saline nasal rinse daily, and add moisture to the air with humidifiers. (Just be sure to clean your humidifier regularly to prevent bacterial growth.)

**Make exercise a habit.** Sure, exercise benefits your body and mind. But it also strengthens your immunities. Take a brisk walk, use resistance weights when watching TV, or dance to some

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favorite tunes. Join a Zoom exercise or yoga class, or look for free workout classes online. Mix it up so you'll stay motivated to move every day. You'll feel better and so will your immune system.

**Reduce stress and relax.** Physical and emotional stress weakens the immune system, so it's vital to find time to recharge and relax. Try meditating, deep breathing, reading, gentle stretching, sipping a hot cup of herbal tea, or taking a short nap.

**Break the sugar habit.** Sugar, refined carbohydrates, and sweetened beverages (including alcohol) suppress the immune system, limiting its ability to ward off bacteria and disease. Swap the sweets and chips for healthier options like fresh fruit, nuts, lean meat, cheese, eggs, plain yogurt with berries, and veggies with hummus. For a splurge, indulge in an ounce of dark chocolate. With all your effort to stay healthy, you'll deserve it!

*Eat Healthy. Be Happy.*

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