

Immune Boosting Protocol

Updated Apr 2020



With the current COVID-19 pandemic, many people are asking what they can do to stay healthy. The scary truth is, there is no cure and there is no prevention. However, that does not mean there is *nothing* we can do to protect ourselves at this time. COVID-19 is caused by a virus called *coronavirus*. It is not a new virus, it is present in the population every winter. It usually causes the common cold. However, it is a virus that can mutate quickly and easily. Some years, these mutations lead to particularly dangerous strains, including SARS and MERS. The best thing we can do is focus on general health and nutrition, particularly aspects known to support a healthy immune system.

This protocol represents a general recommendation for lifestyle modifications and nutritional/herbal supplements to support immune health. These recommendations are all based on the current medical literature.

1. **Stress reduction:** stress itself has been shown to impair immunity. With mounting concerns not only about the pandemic but about job security, finances, social distancing, boredom and all of the stressful details that come with it. It is crucial to find an outlet. Meditation is always a good option. There are a number of apps that can help you get started like Headspace, Meditation Studio, Simple Habit and Happify. Don't think meditation is for you? Check out Honest Meditation. Still not for you? Find another meditative activity - puzzles, coloring, gardening, video games. It doesn't really matter what.
2. **Sleep:** Getting at least 7 hours of sleep nightly is beneficial for immune function. Make an extra effort to make sure you have enough time, make it a priority. If you think you can't spare an hour or two a night, what will you do if you are placed on a strict quarantine!
3. **Stay Connected:** Humans are inherently social creatures. As much as we would like to fantasize about ourselves as heroic loners or independent survivors, the truth is we thrive on social interactions. In this time of social distancing and limited options, find a way to stay connected with your social network.
4. **Get Outside:** The impact of nature on our mental wellbeing can not be overstated. Do your best to get outside, smell the air and feel the sunshine. Even if it only a small yard or a porch, it is still beneficial for stress management. If you truly can't get outside, stare at a picture of nature for 15 minutes. It works almost as well.
5. **Moderate exercise** boosts immunity, so get off the couch and do something! Anything! Pull up an old Tae Bo video, do some yoga at home, or whatever movement gets you motivated. Do not work out to excess. Your body should not be so exhausted and depleted of resources that it has nothing left to fight infection with. So a solo jog on an empty trail is great, but training for an ultramarathon might be counterproductive.

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6. Nutrient Rich Diet: Now is the time to eat the way you always knew you should have! Your favorite restaurants are closed, and you finally have enough time to prepare a meal! It doesn't have to be complicated. Just make sure you are getting plenty of protein and a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Having an array of colors in your diet, particularly in the fruits and veggies, will ensure you have a wide range of nutrients.
7. If you are going to add only one supplement, it should be a good multivitamin. It should include at least 15-20 mg zinc and at least 100% RDA of Vitamins A, C, B12, B6 and Vitamin D.
8. The second most important supplement is the vitamin D. There is a very high rate of deficiency in Americans, which impairs the immunity. The current sunshine restrictions will not help that particular problem. It is time to replete!
9. Zinc supplementation is critical for the function of over 400 processes within the body, particularly in the immune system. It is absolutely essential to keep the immune system in prime shape. In this protocol, Zinc picolinate is used because it may be better absorbed than other forms of zinc, but that is not clear. The optimal form would be zinc lozenges, if you can find them. However, there is a significant zinc shortage. Take what you can get! Alternatively, foods rich in zinc are meat, beans, oysters, shellfish, legumes, seeds and nuts. Other common foods, like breakfast cereal, may be fortified.
10. Vitamin A and C, melatonin provide additional immune support. The melatonin provides both direct support as well as indirect by aiding in the most important factor, adequate sleep.
11. Adaptogens are non-toxic supplements that restore balance to the body. Choose just one of these to add to your regimen.
 - a. Ashwaganda - One of the stronger, more balancing adaptogens. Best of the adaptogens for anxiety. When taken consistently for weeks, improves quality of sleep, stress, fatigue, trouble concentrating, anxiety, depression and cholesterol.
 - b. Rhodiola - almost as powerful of an adaptogen as Ashwaganda. Notable anti-fatigue properties. Users report mental clarity, with measurable improvements in memory and concentration.
 - c. American Ginseng - can improve cholesterol, offering a potential cardiac benefit. Can balance blood sugars. Good choice for those with hypertension, diabetes or cardiac disease.
 - d. Siberian Ginseng (Eleuthero) - Not really ginseng. Improves mental and physical performance during times of stress.
12. For a complete immune support regimen, see the protocol below. The entire protocol is available for easy ordering on Mindful Rx, our online dispensary.

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In the morning, 30 min before breakfast*

- Multivitamin; TCM Immune Support, 1 tab

With breakfast*

- Aswagandha, rhodiola, eleuthero or ginseng; 1 tab or as directed by label

With dinner*

- Vitamin C 1,000 mg
- Vitamin D 5,000-10,000 IU

Before bed, on an empty stomach*

- Active B complex 2 tabs
- Zinc picolinate 20 mg
- Vitamin A 10,000 IU
- Melatonin - there is a very wide range of dosing required by people. Start with 3 mg, increase until desired effect is achieved. Tablets come in 1 mg, 3 mg, 5 mg, 9 mg, 10 mg and 20 mg dosing if you find you are using several tabs a night.

*Timing with regards to both meals and time of day are to maximize the absorption. Taking them at other times, if more convenient or better tolerated by your stomach, will only be slightly less effective. It will not be dangerous and it will not be useless.

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