

Immune-Boosting Foods



Boosting your immune system is essential, especially during the winter months when it seems like everyone you know is coming down with a cold or flu.

Did you know that [70% of our immune system lives in the gut](#)? That's why what we eat plays a huge part in how often we get sick. The good news is, that there are many foods we can find in our local grocery stores that help our immune systems keep us healthy.

This article outlines a few of the best immune-boosting foods to add to your diet.



Prebiotic & Probiotic-Rich Foods

Consuming prebiotic and probiotic-rich foods helps to build and maintain a healthy gut microbiome by feeding beneficial bacteria.

A few **prebiotic** foods that you likely already have in your home are **garlic**, **onions** and **bananas**. The prebiotic benefits of these foods are strongest when consumed raw.

Some of our favourite **probiotic** foods are **yogurt**, **kefir** and **sauerkraut**. These foods are great when purchased from the store, but homemade versions are even better when it comes to packing a probiotic punch.



Citrus Fruits

Reaching for vitamin C-rich citrus fruits when trying to kick a cold or avoid sickness is a great choice.

This is because [vitamin C increases the production of white blood cells](#), which are key to fighting infection.

Popular immune-boosting citrus fruits are **grapefruit**, **oranges** and **tangerines**. These fruits have the highest levels of vitamin C when consumed freshly peeled or juiced instead of canned or bottled on a store shelf.



Ginger & Turmeric

Both ginger and turmeric have many health benefits including being highly anti-inflammatory.

Ginger has been used in Indian, Arabic and Asian countries for centuries to [help with nausea, treat an upset stomach and aid digestion.](#)

Easy ways to bring ginger into your diet are using it in tea, stir-frys or curries or adding it to your favourite smoothie or juice recipe. Though powdered ginger is very convenient, its immune-boosting properties are most potent when consumed fresh.

Turmeric is a root, similar to ginger, that can also often be found fresh at your local grocery store. It's often used to treat swelling and inflammation, arthritis and digestive issues.

Fresh turmeric has quite a strong flavour. A small amount can be added to sauerkraut, juice, and curry. Or, if you're brave you can juice 1-inch fresh turmeric, 1-inch fresh ginger, 2 cloves garlic and 1 orange for an immune-boosting shot.

Don't worry, if you're not a fan of turmeric's strong flavour, you can purchase dried turmeric capsules from most health stores or vitamin sections of grocery stores.



Berries

Berries are a delicious way to boost your immune system as they're full of antioxidants. Antioxidants have been found to [significantly improve certain immune responses.](#)

All berries contain antioxidants, but berries that are often used for immune optimization specifically are **elderberries**, **wild blueberries**, and **acai berries**.

Purchasing elderberry syrup from the health food store, frozen wild blueberries and acai berry smoothie packs make it easier to get the immune boost you're looking for during the winter or when you can't find these berries fresh in-store or from your local market.

Conclusion

The food you eat plays a huge part in how often you get sick. Consuming prebiotic and probiotic-rich foods, citrus fruits, ginger and turmeric, and berries regularly helps to optimize your immune system and keep you and your family happy and healthy.