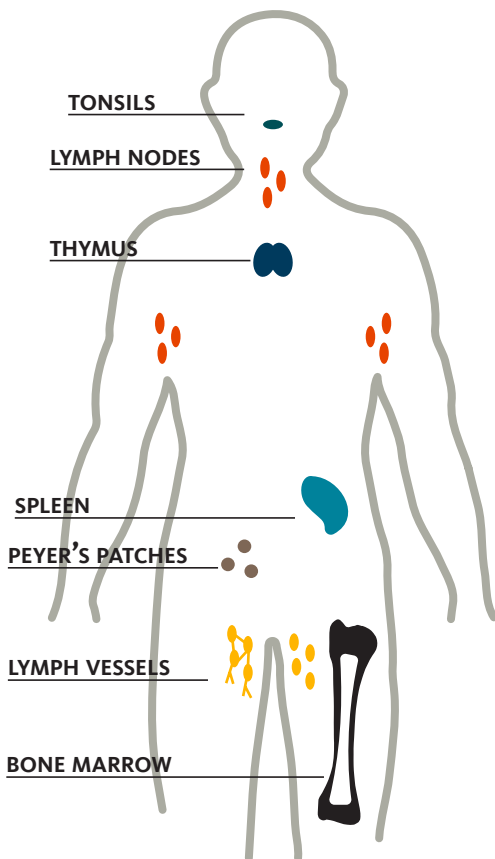


NUTRITION AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

The immune system is constantly working to protect the body from infection, injury, and disease.

OVERVIEW OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

The immune system consists of various organs, tissues, and cells located throughout the body.



WHITE BLOOD CELLS (WBCs)

- The cells of the immune system
- Made inside bone marrow
- WBCs travel through the body inside lymph vessels, which are in close contact with the bloodstream

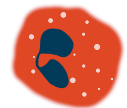
THERE ARE SEVERAL TYPES OF WBCs



NEUTROPHILS
Engulf and destroy



MONOCYTES (MACROPHAGES)
Engulf and destroy



EOSINOPHILS
Fight parasitic infections



BASOPHILS
Release histamine



LYMPHOCYTES
Attack specific pathogens



PLASMA CELLS
Produce antibodies

THE IMMUNE SYSTEM PROVIDES THREE LEVELS OF DEFENSE AGAINST DISEASE-CAUSING ORGANISMS

1

BARRIERS

Prevent entry

- Skin and mucous membranes
- Stomach acid and digestive enzymes
- Beneficial bacteria that live in the colon (the gut microbiota)

2

INNATE IMMUNITY

General defense

- WBCs called neutrophils and macrophages engulf and destroy foreign invaders and damaged cells

3

ACQUIRED IMMUNITY

Specific defense

- WBCs called T lymphocytes (T cells) target and destroy infected or cancerous cells
- WBCs called B lymphocytes (B cells) and plasma cells produce antibodies that target and destroy infected or cancerous cells

NUTRIENTS THAT SUPPORT IMMUNE FUNCTION

NUTRIENT	RDA (ADULTS)	GOOD SOURCES
EPA + DHA	No RDA (Advised to consume two servings of oily fish/week)	herring 3 oz, 1.8 g salmon 3 oz, 1.5 g sardines 3 oz, 1.2 g
Vitamin A*	Men: 900 µg/day RAE Women: 700 µg/day RAE	egg 1 large, 80 µg RAE carrot** ½ cup raw, 534 µg RAE sweet potato** ½ cup baked, 961 µg RAE
Vitamin C*	Men: 90 mg/day Women: 75 mg/day	sweet red pepper 1 medium, 152 mg kiwifruit 1 medium, 91 mg strawberries 1 cup whole, 85 mg
Vitamin D*	19-70 years: 600 IU/day 71 years and older: 800 IU/day	pink salmon 3 oz, 370 IU sardines 3 oz, 164 IU fortified milk 1 serving, 120 IU sunshine
Vitamin E*	All adults: 15 mg/day	almonds 1 oz, 7 mg sunflower oil 1 T, 6 mg avocado 1 whole, 2.7 mg
Folate	All adults: 400 µg/day DFE	lentils ½ cup cooked, 179 µg DFE spinach ½ cup cooked, 131 µg DFE enriched bread*** 1 slice, 84 µg DFE
Vitamin B₁₂	All adults: 2.4 µg/day	clams 3 oz, 84.1 µg mackerel 3 oz, 16.1 µg
Vitamin B₆	19-50 years: 1.3 mg/day Men 51 years and older: 1.7 mg/day Women 51 years and older: 1.5 mg/day	salmon 3 oz, 0.5 mg turkey 3 oz, 0.7 mg potato with skin 1 medium, 0.7 mg
Zinc	Men: 11 mg/day Women: 8 mg/day	oysters 6 medium, 27-50 mg beef 3 oz, 4-6 mg
Iron*	Men and women 51 years and older: 8 mg/day Women 19-50 years: 18 mg/day	beef 3 oz, 1.6 mg tuna 3 oz, 1.3 mg lentils ½ cup cooked, 3.3 mg
Copper	All adults: 900 µg/day	oysters 6 medium, 2,397 µg cashew nuts 1 oz, 622 µg lentils 1 cup cooked, 497 µg
Selenium	All adults: 55 µg/day	tuna 3 oz, 92 µg pork 3 oz, 32.5 µg whole-wheat bread 1 slice, 8.2 µg

RDA = Recommended Dietary Allowance | RAE = retinol activity equivalents | DFE = dietary folate equivalents

IU = International Units | g = grams | mg = milligrams | µg = micrograms | oz = ounce(s) | T = Tablespoon

*Underconsumed by eating the typical American diet. Iron underconsumed by adolescent females and pregnant women only

**A source of provitamin A carotenoids

***A source of folic acid, the synthetic form of folate

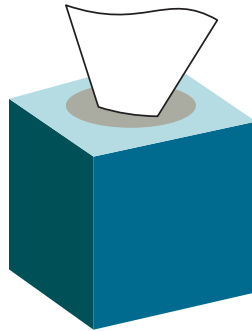
FOR SOME NUTRIENTS, GETTING MORE THAN THE RDA MIGHT BE OF FURTHER BENEFIT

VITAMIN C

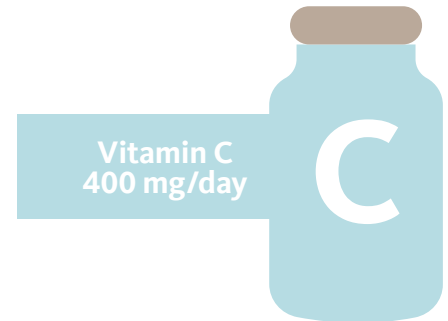
Routine supplementation with vitamin C (0.25 to 2 g/day) reduces the occurrence of the common cold in individuals undergoing heavy physical stress (marathon runners, skiers, and soldiers in subarctic conditions).



Routine supplementation with vitamin C slightly reduces the duration of the common cold.

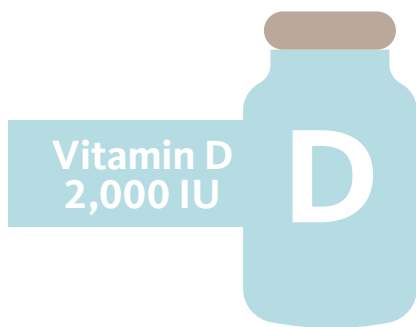


The LPI recommends a daily intake of at least 400 mg of vitamin C for generally healthy adults.



VITAMIN D

Low vitamin D status is linked to a higher risk of upper respiratory tract infections and some autoimmune disorders. Supplementation with vitamin D reduces the risk of acute respiratory tract infection.



The LPI recommends 2,000 IU (50 µg) of supplemental vitamin D daily for generally healthy adults.

SOURCES

Micronutrient Information Center

- lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/health-disease/immunity-in-brief
- lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/health-disease/immunity