



Senior Strong: Tools and tips to building a strong immune system

I think we would all agree, that we are in unprecedented times. The Corona Virus or Covid-19 has changed our world, the state we live in, our personal home life and daily routines. The older adult population and those with compromised systems, are at greater risk. Today I will be sharing some tips on helping ourselves and our older loved ones stay healthy.

So, the immune system is just that. It is a system that requires balance and harmony. There is still much that researchers don't know about the intricacies and interconnectedness of the immune response. For now, there are no scientifically proven direct links between lifestyle and enhanced immune function, however your first line of defense is to choose a healthy lifestyle.

We do know that as we age, our immune response capability becomes reduced, which in turn contributes to more infections and more cancers etc. No one knows for sure why this happens, but some scientists observe that there is a correlation between this increased risk and a decrease in T-cells which fight off infection.

So for now, following general good-health guidelines is the single best step you can take toward naturally keeping your immune system strong and healthy. Every part of your body, including your immune system, functions better when protected from environmental assaults and bolstered by healthy-living strategies.

A couple ways we CAN strengthen our immune system include:

- **Personal Hygiene**

In addition to the social distancing we are all aware of, we also have learned how to properly wash our hands. Handwashing is still the best way to kill germs.

- Lather up with soap and warm water

- Scrub for at least 20 seconds - 2 rounds singing happy birthday or lines from your favorite tune!
- Scrub between fingers, under nails and up your wrists
- Rinse soap off completely, and,
- Dry hands completely
- Also, a reminder to cough and sneeze into your elbow, not your hand which will come in contact with many public surfaces.

- **Exercise regularly**

Regular exercise is one of the pillars of healthy living. It improves cardiovascular health, lowers blood pressure, helps control body weight and protects against a variety of diseases. Moderate exercise mobilizes immune system cells, helping the body defend itself against pathogens and cancer cell growth. Exercise, just like a healthy diet, contributes to overall good health and therefore to a healthy immune system. It may contribute even more directly by promoting good circulation, which allows the cells and substances of the immune system to move through the body freely and do their job efficiently.

- Stay mobile! Strive to get 30-60 minutes of brisk movement daily. Everyone's routine is turned upside down and being housebound presents a whole different level of challenges. Depending on your current level of fitness and physical limitations, I recommend breaking up your sessions into smaller bits, 5-20 minute segments.
- If you can, get outdoors and enjoy nature and the sunshine. There is additional value of good fresh air and vitamin D from the sun.
- If you are housebound you can still incorporate movement inside. Try marching in place, either seated or standing, and throw in a variety of arm movements. Add cross punches, opposite elbow to knee lifts and bicep curls to spice it up and increase the intensity.
- Weave stretching, strengthening and balance movements into your daily routine.
 - Try doing wall push-ups and door-way chest stretches each morning as you make your way to the bathroom.

Wall Push-ups



Door Stretches



- Alternate balancing on one leg for 30 seconds while standing at the kitchen counter.
- Do 20 toe lifts and 20 heel lifts while seated reading a book or watching TV
- Look for opportunities to work your joints through full range of motion throughout the course of the day. Try alternating arm circles forward and backward to maintain mobility of your shoulder joints. And wrist circles in both directions and finger flicks to keep circulation in your hands.

- **Minimize and Manage your Stress**

Stress in all its forms - compromises your immune system. Stress affects everyone differently, but often manifests itself physically i.e. headaches, back aches, increased blood pressure, muscular tension through shoulders and neck etc. My favorite stress-reducing activities include:

- Expressing daily gratitude to myself and others
- 10 minutes of daily focused breath and meditation
- Daily movement and exercise
- Turn off TV at least one hour before bed (I've never been a TV watcher but the news is pulling me in these days)

- **Get Adequate Sleep!**

Among all of the other great benefits of sleep, research shows sleep builds your immune system and improves the specific type of immune cell called the "T-cells" which fights things like the flu. We all know the challenges with sleep deprivation: it can cause changes in mood, thinking skills, and judgement and also lead to many health problems, such as heart disease, obesity and diabetes. **Evening Sleep Routine:**

- Set a bedtime and try to stick to it over the next 10 days.
- Turn your phone on airplane mode, shut off the TV, and put away all devices 45 minutes before bed.
- Use the remaining time to focus on active relaxation. This includes reading, journaling, meditation, or meaningful conversation with loved ones.
- Wake up at the same time every day - wake time is the anchor of your circadian sleep rhythm

Filling your day with more structure will also reinforce your circadian rhythm. Keep a regular schedule for meals, exercise and activities such as housework.

- **Eat a whole foods, nutrient-dense diet. Our immune system relies on nutrient-dense whole foods to function well.**
 - Eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables - a diet that is rich in antioxidants - EAT PLANTS!
 - Our body needs plant nutrition to maintain optimal health...there is no way around it. And your goal is a full rainbow of colors at least 7 servings a day.
 - Citrus fruits (high in Vit C): grapefruit, oranges, tangerines, lemons, limes, clementines
 - Red bell peppers and spinach - high in Vit C, beta carotene keeps eyes and skin healthy and may increase infection fighting ability of our immune systems
 - Broccoli - supercharged Vit A,C,E and other antioxidants and fiber - one of healthiest veges. Eat raw or cook as little as possible
 - Garlic - immune boosting properties
 - Kiwi and papaya - loaded with nutrients
 - Ginger - natural anti-inflammatory
 - Cut out sugar and refined starches. Now has never been a better time for a sugar and junk food detox. Studies have shown that refined sugars can suppress your immune system for hours after ingesting. Limiting starch and sugar will help your immune system function better and your overall health improves. To help you detox from sugar and starch and reset your body to a healthy state check out this 10 Day Reset which is available for free download at www.getfarmacy.com/free

There does appear to be a connection between nutrition and immunity in the elderly. A form of malnutrition, “micronutrient malnutrition”, in which a person is deficient in some essential vitamins and trace minerals that are obtained from or supplemented by diet, is common in the elderly. Additionally, we know that it is common for older adults to lose their appetite, lose ability to taste foods, dental issues may present challenges to chew some foods, and let’s face it - it is no fun to eat alone. The bottom line is many older adults are not getting the nutrients they need from the food they are eating. This is an area where we can provide support and help fill the gap in what they need that they are not getting from food sources.

After researching vitamins and supplements, I have personally found JuicePlus to be the healthiest choice for myself and my family and am encouraging everyone I care about, young and old, to consider it too. We know the importance and correlation of nutrition and health. JuicePlus is an all natural food supplement (not a vitamin) full of whole fruits, berries and vegetables, providing antioxidants and phytonutrients to supplement our food intake - strengthening your immune system. Let me know if you are interested in learning more.

Check out my ***Aging Well Facebook Group*** and join me in sharing and learning from one another.

Kathy O'Neel Webster, CEO, Founder ShipShape
kwebster@shipshaperi.com
401.965.0102
www.shipshaperi.com