

Staying Healthy This Winter And Beyond, With VivaVitae Nutrition



It's not uncommon to feel a bit under the weather at this time of year. To keep us fit and healthy, we've asked Sally Parr from VivaVitae Nutrition for her best tips to help keep your immune system functioning well throughout winter.

Stuffy, crowded shopping centres, packed trains and buses filled with commuters bombarding our immune system with bugs... it's no wonder we seem to catch every cold going at this time of year. Aching arms and legs, a dry throat and swollen glands can all be clues that your body is fending off the bugs, so give it a helping hand by taking it easy until you are on the mend. Here are some other things to think about when it comes to giving your body some TLC for winter.



You are what you eat

Aim to 'eat the rainbow' on as many days of the week as you can, as each variety of fruit and veg is packed full of different antioxidants, essential vitamins and minerals. Science has shown that the body's vitamin C levels decrease when it is fighting the common cold or other infections, so replacing an afternoon sweet treat with citrus fruits or berries can be a good way to add more nutrition into your diet. Serve with natural, organic yogurt to help feed the 'good' bacteria in the gut, as this also helps to regulate the body's immune response.

Think Zinc

Thought to be helpful for preventing colds, good sources of Zinc include cashew nuts, dark chicken meat, almonds, oatmeal and pulses such as lentils, beans and chickpeas. Eating a varied diet is recommended rather than taking supplements, since high doses taken for long periods of time can interfere with absorption of other nutrients.

Spice is nice

Turmeric may help to dampen down inflammation and support immunity. Ginger, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg all work in a similar way. Try adding the dried powder to soups or warmed plant milks, or slice the fresh root and pour boiling water over as an infusion.

Get outside

Even just a quick stroll around the block at lunchtime can ensure you have some exposure to mood-enhancing daylight (which is especially important if you are going to work and home again in the dark). Wrap up warm – scientists found that reduced temperatures lessened the body's immune response.

Take it easy

When you're feeling low on energy, your immune system will struggle to cope and that's when you're most susceptible to catching the office bug. If you do get ill, give yourself time to recover properly before heading back to work.

NB: A balanced diet is the best way to ensure a good intake of vitamins and minerals but in certain situations, it may be worth taking supplements. Rather than self-prescribing, seek advice from a Registered Nutritional Therapist who is a member of BANT and the CNHC – they are trained to advise you on brand, dose and any interactions with medication you may be taking. Nutritional therapy is a complementary therapy and should not be used as a substitute for medical advice. Consult your GP if you have any symptoms that concern you.

Sally is a Registered Nutritional Therapist (mBANT) and Registered Nutritionist (rCNHC) as well as a Metabolic Balance® coach. A Home Economist and freelance journalist who contributes to the national press on the subject of food, nutrition and lifestyle, Sally works with clients of all ages and stages, helping them to attain their personal health and wellbeing goals.

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