

Rebecca Cockrill

10-Ways to Boost your Immune System

1. Hydration:

I know you've heard this before, so let me say it again. It is so important to drink enough water everyday.

Not too long ago I was doing some work for a friend, it was early in the morning and all of a sudden I felt dizzy and lightheaded. I couldn't imagine why I was feeling so crummy and then I realized that I had not been drinking enough water. The first thing I did was grab a glass of water and within an hour I was feeling like myself again. Our bodies are made up of between 50 and 80 percent water. Some organs are made up of more water and some less, and the truth is we need water to keep our organs healthy.

Fun facts and simple tips:

Water hydrates your entire system, which is vital for your cell, tissue, and organ regeneration. By keeping your blood at the right consistency, it helps deliver oxygen to your muscles, which immediately boosts your body's energy.

Important Facts About Water:

- Carries nutrients to our cells
- Aids digestion by forming stomach secretions
- Flushes bodily waste
- Keeps kidneys healthy
- Keeps moisture-rich organs (our eyes, skin, mouth, and nose) functioning well
- Fights fatigue and gives you extra energy
- Helps clear skin
- Prevents muscle cramps
- Regulates body temperature and metabolism
- Plays a crucial role in disease prevention
- Reduces inflammation
- Promotes cartilage health
- Slows the signs of aging

How to Calculate Your Daily Fluid Needs

You can estimate how many fluid ounces to drink each day by multiplying your body weight in pounds by .5 or, if you plan to exercise or spend time in extreme heat or cold use .66.

How to Tell Whether You're Drinking Enough

To check whether drinking enough throughout the day, glance in the toilet after you pee. If it's light yellow it means you're hydrated, but if your urine is dark, your body is not getting enough water.

How to Track Your Water Intake

Fill a jug of water each morning and get out your favorite glass. Place the number of rubber bands equal to the number of glasses of water you need to drink daily on your glass and remove one each time you refill.

Place a glass of water on your bedside table at night.

Buy a classy water bottle that you can carry with you when you leave home.

"I work with those who want to heal chronic diseases naturally and reboot their mind, body and spirit to live fully."

Rebecca Cockrill

How To Drink Water When You Don't Like The Taste Of Water:

- Add slices of lemon, lime, cucumber or orange to water
- Add mint leaves
- Drink your favorite flavor herbal tea, iced or hot
- Heat and drink with lemon

2. Foods That Boost Your Immune System

Berries

All varieties of Berries have antioxidant properties; Cherries, Strawberries, Blueberries, etc.

Berries contain a type of flavonoid called anthocyanin, which has antioxidant properties that can help boost your immune system.

Dark chocolate

It's hard to believe, I know. Who doesn't love chocolate! I remember when my naturopath oncologist told me that I needed to eat at least 8 oz of chocolate every day. Yes, please!!! Who knew you could heal your body and still eat chocolate!

Dark chocolate contains an antioxidant called theobromine, which may help to boost the immune system by protecting the body's cells from free radicals.

There are so many varieties of chocolate out there, try them all and find the one you like the best. It's best to eat 70% or higher dark chocolate. I look for chocolate made with sweeteners such as stevia because the number one thing cancer feeds on is cane sugar. My favorite is Eating Evolved-Primal Chocolate and Lulu's Chocolate, both of which you can buy at Whole Foods or order online.

Oily fish

Salmon, tuna, pilchards, and other oily fish are a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids. According to a 2014 report by the BMJ, long-term intake of omega-3 fatty acids may reduce the risk of Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA).

Broccoli

A great source of vitamin C and other potent antioxidants. It's a great choice to eat regularly to support immune system health.

Sweet potatoes

Sweet potatoes are rich in beta-carotene, the antioxidant responsible for its orange skin and flesh. Beta-carotene is a source of vitamin A which helps to make the skin healthy. If you find that one sweet potato is too large you can cut it in half. I always bake one, cut it in half, eat half today and save the other half for tomorrow; have it for lunch or as a snack.

Turmeric

Turmeric is a yellow spice many people use in cooking. Consuming turmeric will improve your immune response. This is due to curcumin, a compound in turmeric, that has antioxidants and anti-inflammatory effects.

Here's a great recipe for Chicken Tikka Masala, makes 6 servings and takes about an hour of prep time.

"I work with those who want to heal chronic diseases naturally and reboot their mind, body and spirit to live fully."

Rebecca Cockrill

Chicken Tikka Masala

Ingredients

6 garlic cloves, finely grated
4 teaspoons finely grated peeled ginger
4 teaspoons ground turmeric
2 teaspoons garam masala
2 teaspoons ground coriander
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 1/2 cups yogurt
1 tablespoon kosher salt
2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken breasts or thighs
3 tablespoons ghee (clarified butter) or olive oil
1 small onion, thinly sliced
1/4 cup tomato paste
6 cardamom pods, crushed
2 dried chiles de árbol or 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes
2 cups heavy cream
3/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro plus sprigs for garnish
Steamed basmati rice (for serving)

1. Combine garlic, ginger, turmeric, garam masala, coriander, and cumin in a small bowl. Whisk yogurt, salt, and half of spice mixture in a medium bowl; add chicken and turn to coat. Cover and chill 4-6 hours. Cover and chill remaining spice mixture.
2. Heat ghee in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add onion, tomato paste, cardamom, and chiles and cook, stirring often, until tomato paste has darkened and onion is soft, about 5 minutes. Add remaining half of spice mixture and cook, stirring often, until bottom of pot begins to brown, about 4 minutes.
3. Add tomatoes with juices, crushing them with your hands as you add them. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer, stirring often and scraping up browned bits from bottom of pot, until sauce thickens, 8-10 minutes.
4. Add cream and chopped cilantro. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until sauce thickens, 30-40 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, preheat broiler. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and set a wire rack inside sheet. Arrange chicken on rack in a single layer. Broil until chicken starts to blacken in spots (it will not be cooked through), about 10 minutes.
6. Cut chicken into bite-size pieces, add to sauce, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until chicken is cooked through, 8-10 minutes. Serve with rice and cilantro sprigs.
****Chicken can be made 2 days ahead. Cover; chill. Reheat before serving.

"I work with those who want to heal chronic diseases naturally and reboot their mind, body and spirit to live fully."

Rebecca Cockrill

Spinach

Spinach may boost the immune system, as it contains many essential nutrients and antioxidants including: flavonoids, carotenoids, vitamins c and e.

You can add spinach to your eggs in the morning or add it to a smoothie.

Blueberry Spinach Smoothie

2/3 cup plain Greek yogurt.

1 ripe banana.

2/3 cup frozen blueberries.

2 large frozen strawberries.

1 cup spinach leaves.

1/2 cup milk of (coconut, soy, almond)

2 teaspoons protein powder (optional)

1 tablespoon of honey, or to taste.

Blend in blend and *Enjoy!*

3. Get Enough Sleep

Sleep affects your body's inflammatory responses. Poor sleep is strongly linked to inflammatory bowel diseases and other autoimmune diseases and can increase your risk of disease recurrence.

Studies have shown:

- Even a small loss of sleep has been shown to impair immune function.
- People who sleep less than seven hours are almost three times more likely to develop an illness than those who sleep eight hours or more.
- Sleep can have a major effect on inflammation in your body.
- Poor sleep has been strongly linked to long-term inflammation of the digestive tract
- Sleep-deprived people with Crohn's disease and other autoimmune diseases are twice as likely to relapse as people who sleep well.

Here's a few Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

I know that falling asleep can sometimes be a challenge. One of my favorite things to do at night is read a good book, but I usually only make it through a few pages before my eyes get heavy. I know that reading a book may not work for everybody, so here are a few other things that may help.

- Practice going to bed and waking up at the same time each day
- Avoid watching TV in the bedroom and leave your cell phone in the living room or kitchen.
- Create an environment in your bedroom that encourages sleep by using serene and restful colors and eliminating clutter and distraction (Also: avoid family photos in your bedroom decor for even more of a spa-like feel)
- Create total darkness and quiet - consider using eyeshades and earplugs
- Avoid caffeine or reduce intake after noon -- it may make sleep worse

"I work with those who want to heal chronic diseases naturally and reboot their mind, body and spirit to live fully."

Rebecca Cockrill

- Get regular exposure to daylight for at least 20 minutes a day. The light from the sun enters your eyes and triggers your brain to release specific chemicals and hormones like melatonin that are vital to healthy sleep, mood, and aging
- Eat no later than two hours before bed -- eating a heavy meal prior to bed will lead to a bad night's sleep and will impede the body's overnight detoxification process
- Write down your worries. During your Power Down Hour, write down the things that are causing you anxiety and make plans for what you might have to do the next day to reduce your worry. It will free up your mind and energy and move you into a deep and restful sleep
- Take a hot salt or aromatherapy bath. Raising your body temperature before bed helps to induce sleep. A hot bath also relaxes your muscles and reduces tension physically and psychically. By adding 1/2 to 1 cup of Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate) and 1/2 to 1 cup of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) to your bath, you will gain the benefits of magnesium absorbed through your skin and the alkaline-balancing effects of the baking soda, both of which help with sleep
- Get a massage, stretch or have sex before bed

4. Exercise

Exercise can lead to a happier, healthier you. I'm not talking about going to the gym every day. I'm talking about moving your body in any way you think will push you a little more than you have been.

If you can't find a large enough chunk of time for formal exercise every day. Try to be more active throughout your day — take the stairs instead of the elevator or rev up your household chores. It could be as simple as not taking that parking spot up front and parking your car a little farther away and walking a few extra steps. Take a dance break in the middle of the day, put on some of your favorite music and dance away. One of my favorite songs I dance to is "Girl on Fire" by Alicia Keys! I invite you to find your song and dance! Whatever you decide to do, the key is to be consistent.

- Exercise combats health conditions and diseases
- Exercise improves mood
- Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier and more relaxed.
- Exercise boosts energy
- Exercise promotes better sleep
- Exercise puts the spark back into your sex life. But there's even more to it than that, regular physical activity may enhance arousal for women. And men who exercise regularly are less likely to have problems with erectile dysfunction than are men who don't exercise.
- Exercise with a friend, take a walk, enjoy the outdoors or simply engage in activities that make you happy.
- Aim for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise, or 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise.

5. Reduce Your Stress

Not all stressors are within your control, but some are. Take control over the parts of your life that you can change and are causing you stress. A good stress reliever is to stand up, let go of all your thoughts, and shake your body! And I mean moving your whole body, your arms, your shoulders, wiggling your hips, and your fingers, shake all over. When you do this for a couple of minutes you'll feel more relaxed and find you have better focus.

- Exercise is one of the most important things you can do to combat stress. The benefits are strongest when you exercise regularly. People who exercise regularly are less likely to experience anxiety than those who don't exercise.
- Aromatherapy can help lower anxiety and stress. Using essential oils may help reduce your feelings of stress and anxiety.

"I work with those who want to heal chronic diseases naturally and reboot their mind, body and spirit to live fully."

Rebecca Cockrill

Some scents are especially soothing (Lavender, Rose, Vetiver, Bergamot, Roman chamomile, Neroli, Frankincense, Sandalwood, Ylang -Ylang, Orange or orange blossom, Geranium.)

- Write It down. Don't just write down what you're stressed about and all those to do's that are crowding your calendar, take time to acknowledge what you're grateful for and write that down too. Gratitude can relieve stress and anxiety by focusing your thoughts on what's positive in your life. It will completely change your perspective.

6. Journal

Keep a journal beside your bed and every night write down 3 things you are grateful for. After I've written my three new things, I close my eyes and open to an older page to remember what I had written before.

7. Spend Time with Friends and Family

Having strong social ties may help you get through stressful times and lower your risk of anxiety. I'm not talking about following your friend on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and commenting on the dinner picture they just posted. I'm talking about actually socializing and having a face to face interactions.

One study found that for women, in particular, spending time with friends and children helps release oxytocin, a natural stress reliever. This effect is called "tend and befriend," and is the opposite of the fight-or-flight response.

Both men and women benefit from friendship.

Another study found that men and women with the fewest social connections were more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety.

8. Laugh

In the book "The Monk Who Sold His Ferreri", Robin S. Sharma, writes, *Take a guess how many times the average four-year-old laughs in a day.*

Answer: Who knows?

I do, three hundred. Now guess how many times the average adult in our society laughs in the course of a day. Answer: Fifty?

Try fifteen... You see my point? Laughing is medicine for the soul. Even if you don't feel like it, look in the mirror and laugh for a couple of minutes. You can't help but feel fantastic. We don't laugh because we are happy, we are happy because we laugh.

I am reminded of the story of Norman Cousins who was given a few months to live in 1964. He had Ankylosing Spondylitis, a rare disease of the connective tissues. He was told by a doctor, who also was his friend, that he had a 1 in 500 chance of survival. He was told to "get his affairs in order."

But Cousins would have none of it. As a journalist, he was used to researching and set himself to find a solution.

Here's what he did;

He fired his doctor and left the hospital to check into a hotel. He obtained a movie projector and a pile of funny movies Where he spent a great deal of time watching these movies and laughing. And he didn't just

"I work with those who want to heal chronic diseases naturally and reboot their mind, body and spirit to live fully."

Rebecca Cockrill

laugh. In spite of being in a lot of constant pain, he made a point of laughing until his very stomach hurt from it.

He lived for 26 more years.

It's hard to feel anxious when you're laughing. It's good for your health, and there are a few ways it may help relieve stress:

- There is scientific proof that laughter can improve your immune system and mood.
- A study among people with cancer found that people in the laughter intervention group experienced more stress relief than those who were simply distracted.
- Find the humor in everyday life. Spend time with funny friends or watch a comedy show to help relieve stress.
- Laughter:
 - Brings more oxygen into your body and organs.
 - Stimulates and relieves your stress response.
 - Relieves tension by relaxing your muscles.

9. Learn to Say No

If you're like me, I never want to say "no." I sometimes think I'm Superwoman and I think, no problem, I can just squeeze in one more thing, and end up saying "yes, I would love to help." But the truth is, sometimes I have so many things on my plate that I just can not do one more thing. When I say yes to you I am actually saying no to something else that is important to me. That can make me resentful, stressed and overburdened. I had to learn to say "No, I would love to help you, but today I just can't." Sometimes it's just looking at my calendar and prioritizing what's most important to me, then deciding what I can cross off my calendar or what I can move to another day. I am forever grateful for the day I made the decision to say no to conventional medicine, and yes to find a way to heal naturally. I think Viktor Frankl, a Nazi concentration camp survivor said it best, "The Last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances."

10. Practice Mindfulness

One of my favorite ways to reconnect with myself and increase my mindfulness is to find a comfortable place to sit, put my feet flat on the floor, and close my eyes. I put my hand on my heart, take a deep breath and count to five. I hold my breath for another count of five and slowly release my breath and count to seven. I do this several times, as I feel myself relaxing and becoming more aware of who I am and what it is I want to do. You can do a modified version is wherever you are just breathing to the count of 5-5-7. It will do wonders!

My challenge to you is to find the practice that helps you discover your inner peace. Take 10 mins each day to reconnect with yourself in the present moment.

What is Mindfulness and What Can It do for you?

- Mindfulness describes practices that anchor you to the present moment.
- It can help combat the anxiety-inducing effects of negative thinking.
- There are several methods for increasing mindfulness, including mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction, yoga, and meditation.
- A recent study in college students suggested that mindfulness may help increase self-esteem, which in turn lessens symptoms of anxiety and depression.

"I work with those who want to heal chronic diseases naturally and reboot their mind, body and spirit to live fully."