

SUPPLEMENTS AND IMMUNITY

WHAT IS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM?

The immune system is a balanced network of cells and organs, which work together to defend against disease.

CAN I “BOOST” IMMUNITY THROUGH SUPPLEMENTS?

There are many claims that supplements, herbs, essential oils and even juice cleanses can “boost immunity.” *However, most of these claims are not backed by science, and may even be harmful for your health.* Saying you want to “boost” your immune system is the same as saying you want your immune system to be well.

ARE SUPPLEMENTS ALWAYS SAFE TO USE?

Supplements are not regulated by the government in the same way as medications.

This means they may not contain the ingredients listed on the bottle, or that they may contain additional ingredients. If you are considering taking a supplement, discuss it with your doctor or a healthcare professional beforehand.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE:

To keep your immune system healthy and prepared to fight off disease, focus on a **WELL-BALANCED DIET** that follows MyPlate guidelines.

For more information on MyPlate guidelines, visit: ChooseMyPlate.gov

For more information on supplements, visit: ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/list-all



SUPPLEMENT MYTHS BUSTED!

VITAMIN C

Myth: Taking large doses will prevent you from developing a cold.

Truth: Taking vitamin C after a cold begins will not improve your symptoms or help you recover quicker. Limited evidence suggests taking vitamin C before a cold begins may shorten the length of the cold by one day.

ZINC

Myth: Using a nasal spray or zinc tablets will help shorten the length of a cold.

Truth: There is some evidence that zinc taken within 24 hours of a cold onset could shorten the length of the cold. However, some people report loss of smell with use of nasal sprays.

VITAMIN E

Myth: Large amounts of vitamin E can prevent developing disease or illness.

Truth: High doses of vitamin E beyond the daily recommendation may weaken the immune system.



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