

Support Your Health with Nutrition

By Stephanie Pradun, RD, LDN, TRIO Registered Dietitian

With the colder months comes flu season, more time indoors, and a greater risk of getting sick. In addition, as we age, our immune response gets weaker because the number and quality of immune cells decreases. Take steps to boost your immune system with scientifically proven strategies all year round.

Foundation for good health

Along with good hygiene and handwashing, adequate sleep, and stress management, good nutrition is important to supporting a strong immune system. There isn't a "magic bullet" of a single food or supplement that can prevent illness but choosing a variety of healthy foods on a regular basis can promote good health. The following nutrients are widely available in both plant and animal foods.

Nutrients to support a healthy immune system

Protein (Iron) – important for healing and recovery, including production of new immune cells. Choose a variety of protein foods such as lean meat, eggs, beans, and unsalted nuts and seeds. Vitamin A (Beta-Carotene) – keeps skin and tissues healthy, which keeps germs out. This vitamin is especially abundant in vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach, and red bell peppers. Vitamin C – helps the immune system fight infection. Add daily servings of citrus fruits, bell peppers, strawberries, broccoli, or tomatoes to get. Vitamin D – can prevent some respiratory infections. Vitamin D is found in fatty fish and eggs. Zinc – helps the immune system work properly. This nutrient is best absorbed from animal sources, such as beef and seafood, but is also found in beans, nuts and tofu. Selenium – plays a role in antioxidant response. It is widely available in whole grains, dairy products, lean meats, and eggs.

Sources: <https://www.eatright.org>
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/>

Oregon Cascades West

Dining Centers & Days of Service Call for Lunch Reservations

Our menus include a variety of foods to provide you with well-balanced meals, which are lower in fat and sodium and offer the choice of a diabetic friendly dessert.

LINN COUNTY

Albany Senior Center

Monday-Friday (541) 967-7647

Brownsville Christian Church

Tues & Thurs (541) 466-5015

Lebanon Senior Center

Monday-Friday (541) 451-1139

Mill City, First Presbyterian

Tues & Thurs (503) 897-2204

Sweet Home Community Center

Mon., Tues., Fri (541) 367-8843

BENTON COUNTY

Corvallis Senior Center

Monday-Friday (541) 223-1005

LINCOLN COUNTY

Lincoln City Community Center

Mon., Wed., Fri (541) 994-7731

Newport Senior Center

Mon., Wed., Fri (541) 574-0669

Siletz, Tribal Community Center

Mon & Wed (541) 270-6853

Toledo, Trinity United Methodist

Friday (541) 270-7416

Waldport, South County SR. CTR

Mon., Wed., Fri (541) 563-8796