



Ask Dr. Sudi

What You Can Do to Boost Your Immune System This Winter

As we are going through the second winter of living through a pandemic, we are battling with many challenges that will directly affect our resilience to fight any infection. According to CDC, over 146 million Americans have been infected with COVID so far. What concerns me the most is that some people are now catching COVID for the second time. This means that some of us are more prone to sickness than others. We have reached a point in our lives where we no longer can stay healthy by eating the typical American diet. The food industry seems to be putting more harmful products than healthful nutrition in their processed and packaged food. Taking vitamins and supplements are now the minimum requirement for our survival. Additionally, our lifestyles have changed so much that getting mentally and physically fit is a non-negotiable task.

As we try to figure out what we need to do to get healthy we find so much information on the internet intermixed with marketing and advertisement that it is difficult to discern what is important or not.

In this column, I am mixing my clinical knowledge with a few practical "hacks" discovered by some brilliant physicians and scientists who are offering their expertise to the public at zero costs in a language that is understood without getting lost. My recommendations are based on my personal knowledge as a physician and surgeon, with an additional background in studying microbiology and molecular genetics at UCLA as an undergraduate, followed by my graduate studies at the UCLA School of Public Health, combined with my skills as a board certified Integrative and Holistic practitioner.

In my clinical practice, I always look for simple solutions to complex problems. I try to discover the root cause of a patient's disease and avoid or lessen the need for "treating symptoms" with prescriptions or surgeries.

In addition to keeping up with the medical information in medicine, I also spend a good amount of time carefully listening to the podcasts that are offered by reputable scientists like Dr. Andrew Huberman at Stanford university or talented physicians and scientists like Dr. Mark Hyman and Dr. William Li. I am summarizing the take-away messages from their latest podcasts in addition to my own clinical experience here to offer simple solutions that will keep you healthy and safe through this winter and thereafter.

Included are the links to some of the valuable podcasts and scientific papers for you to listen to or read.

Here is the list of my TOP 10 recommendations:

1. Take Vitamins & Supplements daily:

- Multivitamin
- Probiotic & Prebiotic
- Omega 3 fatty acids
- B complex
- Vitamin D +K2
- Vitamin C
- Zinc
- Minerals
- Echinacea
- Elderberry
- OPC3
- Resveratrol

This link (moeinhealth.org) will take you to a summary of

how every one of these vitamins and supplements helps your immunity and well-being.

This list looks like a lot, and yes, it is, however, once you get on the path and practice the other 9 recommendations in this column and after this winter passes, your need for all of these supplements will most likely not be on a daily basis. You can also take products that have a balanced mixture of all of these in a daily packet. A few examples are: Nutrametrix Isotonix Daily Essential Packets (<https://www.nutrametrix.com/drmoein/product/nutrametrix-isotonix-daily-essentials-packets/>), or Athletic Greens (<https://athleticgreens.com/hubermanlab>)

2. Food is Medicine:

Healthy food is good medicine, and unhealthy food is poison. The human body is an incredible adapting machine that tries to tolerate a lot of abuse. It also can do the opposite and thrive on healthy food. A few important hacks that will help reduce the inflammation in your body are:

Avoid any "seed" oil. Take olive oil daily. Enjoy coconut, avocado, and sesame oil. If you eat out avoid fried food. The toxic effect of eating French fries at a fast-food restaurant remains in your body for about 4 days, whereas the toxic effect of smoking one cigarette is less than 4 hours. You can make French fries with good oil at home and enjoy them without feeling guilty.

Try to wean yourself off gluten and corn slowly. You will discover a lot of delicious gluten-free bread and pastry in the process. If you love gluten and don't want to quit, you can ask your doctor to test you for gluten sensitivity and then decide.

Eat fiber-rich food and consume a fiber supplement twice a day. My most favorite all-natural fiber supplement is Manna Cleanse from mannatech.com.

Eat berries, pomegranate, kiwi, cherries, mangos, and cruciferous vegetables EVERYDAY. Enjoy seasonal fruits and vegetables.

On your plate try to place 80% greens, and 20% meat or any type of healthy protein like garbanzo beans, lentils, eggs, or tofu. You can eat fatty meat or fry your food in healthy fat. This will eventually make you not feel hungry as often because your body will experience fewer insulin spikes during the day, and once you experience the feeling of satiety during the day, take advantage of it and try not to eat because your body is burning your fat for fuel.

Try to learn about healthy eating, prepare healthy alternatives, and more importantly see how your body reacts to them. This knowledge is priceless. With this routine, eating healthy will become second nature to you.

"Prepare your own meals from scratch as often as possible. Make healthy food choices and be enthusiastic about it!"

-Dr. William Li (<https://drwilliamli.com/masterclass/>)

During this sixty-minute free masterclass, Dr. Li will break down each of the health defense systems to help you understand the basics of how they function...

3. Caloric Restriction:

Let's eliminate the term "diet" and "weight loss" from our vocabulary. A few scientifically proven hacks are, refraining from eating 3 hours before you go to sleep and 1 hour after you wake up. Set a goal to ultimately eat for 8-11 hours and fast for 13-16 hours every 24 hours. "Intermittent fasting is beneficial if not essential for your immune system and health". Dr. Eric Berg DC. (<https://youtu.be/xFOJh19Ubw>).

Food is meant to be pleasurable! Indulge in a variety, but in small quantities of each variety in one or two meals a day.

It's ok to fall off the wagon occasionally and eat something unhealthy or not fast, because your body's defenses are strengthened by a mostly healthy diet and lifestyle.

4. Exercise efficiently:

I believe that exercise is never easy, even for hard-core athletes, because it demands discipline. The human body is designed to avoid pain and seek pleasure. Exercise however offers tremendous benefits for mental health, boosting immunity, preventing cancer, improving sexual health, and is the best anti-aging tool we can have for free.

You need about 150-180 minutes of exercise per week to boost your immune system. This translates to either 30 minutes a day for 6 days a week or 45-60 minutes a day for 3 days a week. There are numerous scientific studies demonstrating that

the best form of exercise is HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training). There are numerous short HIIT videos on YouTube that are effective and available for free. You can start doing HIIT for 10 minutes a day and see where it takes you!

5. Balance your Hormones:

The human hormones are immune modulators. Balancing your cortisol, estrogens, progesterone, testosterone, and thyroid hormone will directly affect your immunity. It is reasonable to ask your doctor to check your hormone levels and ask about conservative hormone therapy options as long as it is not contraindicated for your health. A natural way of balancing your hormones is to exercise, eat healthy, and sleep well. A few natural supplements and herbs that will directly help your hormonal health in addition to the supplements I have listed earlier, are Selenium, Ashwagandha, and Shatavari, fennel, Black Cohosh root, and Oregano. My number one go to is Ashwagandha as it is an excellent adaptogen and I have seen my patients benefit from it most.

6. Sleep regularly and adequately:

Sleep is the foundation of our physical and mental health. It is the single most effective thing you can do to reset your body and brain. Poor sleep directly affects your immune system. The three most important pieces of advice I can give you about sleep are:

- a. Turn off your phone one hour before your bedtime and leave your phone outside your bedroom if you can.
- b. If you snore at night, please speak to your family Doctor.
- c. If you get hot flashes at night, you MUST seek help. The solution for hot flashes can be hormonal or non-hormonal and both are equally effective if personalized.

Here is the link to an excellent talk by Dr. Andrew Huberman on sleep hygiene (<https://youtu.be/nm1TxQj9lsQ>) and an interview with one of the most renowned sleep experts, Dr. Mathew Walker, the author of "Why We Sleep" (<https://youtu.be/gbQFSMayJxk>).

7. Breath from your nose:

Nasal breathing is one of the few ways that one can promote his or her health. I started practicing nasal breathing when I was in medical school for the purpose of stress reduction. For a long time, I was hesitant to tell my patients about the benefits of nasal breathing as it was not popular in the early part of my clinical career. It is now exciting to see the scientific community unraveling the numerous benefits of nasal breathing. The scientific facts, based on research and evidence are numerous. The latest book written by Dr. Sandra Khan at Stanford University, titled "Jaws: The Story of a Hidden Epidemic", talks about the increase in the infection rates that one can get when breathing through the mouth.

Our body carries over 100 trillion bacteria and other microbes collectively known as your microbiomes. Different parts of our body (eye, nose, mouth, intestinal tract, urethra, and vagina) have specific microbiomes, whose function is to destroy invading microorganisms in the respective tract. The nasal microbiome is particularly good at scrubbing invaders in the air that we inhale. So, in general, when possible, breathe through your nose. Some may say that they have a deviated septum or chronically collapsed sinuses, so they can't breathe through their nose. The best way to actually dilate the collapsed

sinuses is to breathe through your nose. It takes a bit of time but there is plasticity to our nasal passage and sinuses that will adapt to accommodate and facilitate nasal breathing. Your nose is a much better filter for viruses and bacteria than your mouth. Oxygenation of your nasal tract is also important to maintain its health." Dr. Andrew Huberman

8. Practice Wim-Hoff (Tummo) breathing 1-3 times a day:

(<https://youtu.be/tybOi4hjZFQ>) It is free and accessible on YouTube. This may initially sound odd to you, however, the benefits of Wim Hoff / Tummo breathing has been scientifically studied and published. You can find the paper at this link: (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24799686/>). It shows exactly how this breathing method enhances the human immune response in combating infections and also reduces unhealthy inflammation. In this study, they injected the subjects with E Coli bacteria, and they demonstrated that the subjects who performed Wim-Hoff breathing had no flu-like symptoms from the E Coli injected into their veins. This study is unique and courageous but scientifically proves the importance of conscious and rhythmic breathing for recruiting our body's healing ability to fight diseases and infections.

9. Practice daily Gratitude:

The benefits of practicing gratitude are nearly endless. People who REGULARLY practice gratitude by taking the time to notice and reflect upon the things they're thankful for, experience more positive emotions, feel more alive, sleep better, express more compassion and kindness, and even have stronger immune systems. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVjfFN89qvQ>

10. Forgive yourself and others but do not forget, and do something about it:

This podcast (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPjM-hj-UWc>) by Dr. Caroline Leaf the author of "Cleaning Up Your Mental Mess", is incredibly crafted and supported by decades of her scientific research as a neuroscientist. Try to connect to people who make you happy. Build your own community and enjoy it. Human interaction is the single most important remedy for our mind and body now and forever.

This pandemic will pass, and we will get back to our past lives with much more zeal to savor it.

Be patient and live in the moment.

I wish you much love and good health.

Dr. Sudi

