

Nine tips for recharging your immune system

written by Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum | February 25, 2014

The U.S. government spends about 1/5th of its budget on defense. In the same way, your body “spends” a lot of its resources to protect you from outside invaders – using your military-like immune system.



Yes, you can think of your immune system as a kind of military organization. And its mission is to protect you from outside invaders called antigens. Antigens include not only infections, but can include any protein that looks foreign to your immune system, including toxins, allergens, and even (and especially!) incompletely digested food.

Your immune system does not believe in the Geneva convention, and it will kill outside invaders by any means possible, including chemical warfare (antibodies and cytokines), tank divisions (made up of whole armies of white blood cells), and more. This makes your immune system very complex – and very effective. But it remains so only as long as it has the resources needed to fight, and as long as it’s not constantly getting overwhelmed.

In this article, I discuss the 8 key factors that can sabotage your immune system – and 9 tips that can help keep your system strong.

Eight Reasons Your Immune System Is Overwhelmed

Chemical Pollution

There are more than 85,000 new synthetic chemicals in the environment today that human immune systems never had to deal with before.

Imbalanced Gut Bacteria

In health, there are more bacteria in the digestive tract than there are cells in the rest of the entire body! So it should come as no surprise that the largest portion of immune activity is generated in the gut. Healthy bacteria in the gut (i.e., probiotics) work hand in hand with your immune system to keep out ‘bad guy’ infections. Unfortunately, the widespread use of antibiotics and antacids, along with a diet loaded with Candida-feeding sugar, has disrupted the bacterial balance, leading to an overgrowth of unhealthy bacteria and Candida – and a weakened immune system. Probiotics can be very helpful, but it is critical to use a brand that has an enteric coating to protect the healthy probiotics as they pass through the stomach. Otherwise, they will be killed by your stomach acid, making them unable to fight off the bad guys. An excellent brand that provides this type of protective coating is Pearls Elite. The “pearls” act like a little Army tank that carries the healthy bacteria safely past the stomach acid, where they can then dissolve – releasing over 5 billion probiotic troops in tip top

shape. It would take over 30 gallons of “live culture” yogurts to get the effective amount delivered by just 1 pearl!

Food Stripped of Enzymes and Nutrients

The enzymes that cause food to ripen are also needed by our body to digest the food. But food manufacturers have figured out that removing those enzymes during food processing prolongs shelf life. This widespread practice has dramatically increased problems with not only digestion, but also immunity. Why? Without these enzymes, the proteins in food are only partially digested. And then those protein particles enter the bloodstream, where they're mistakenly identified as outside invaders – further stressing an already overtaxed immune system. To put it in perspective, the weight of the protein in a hamburger can be thousands of times the total weight of all the viral particles when one has the flu!

Leaky Gut

To make matters worse, intestinal overgrowth of bacteria and fungi (yeast) like candida also weaken the barrier formed by our intestinal wall. This leaves our “border crossings” wide open for partially digested proteins to enter the bloodstream. (Candida is particularly tough for your immune system to handle because it's such a BIG organism. Think of a virus as the size of a period at the end of sentence. Now think of candida as the size of a house!)

Poor Sleep

Sleep rests and regenerates the immune system. In fact, sleep deprivation is a well-known method for weakening immunity, and the 21st century is a sleep deprivation experiment on a massive scale! In the last 130 years, the average night's sleep has plummeted from 9 hours to 6 3/4 hours, which has further weakened our immunity.

Sugar Overload

The amount of sugar in a can of soda can suppress immune function by 30% for three hours. The average American consumes 150 pounds of sugar added to their diet in food processing per year, which sours the disposition of the immune system. (Excess sugar also feeds candida, promoting yeast overgrowth.)

Zinc Deficiency

Zinc is a key player in keeping a healthy immune system. But this trace mineral is a frequent victim of food processing. In addition, but chronic infections and inflammation lead to further zinc losses in the body. This sets up a vicious cycle of low zinc causing more infections causing more zinc loss.

Imbalanced Hormones

Healthy functioning of your adrenal glands is a must for strong immunity. But because of non-stop stress, poor sleep, excess sugar and other factors, many people have either under- or overactive adrenal glands.

Top Nine Tips for Healthy Immunity

Okay, those are the potential problems. The good news is that some simple measures can help you maintain a healthy and strong immune system.

1. Get eight hours of sleep a night.

There are easy ways to make sure you get enough sleep:

- Reserve caffeine-containing foods and beverages for before 4 PM.
- Eat a 1-2 ounce high-protein snack at bedtime.
- Avoid midnight bathroom interruptions by not drinking fluids an hour or two before bedtime.
- Take a hot bath before bed.
- Keep your bedroom cool.
- Get out of bed the same time every morning, even after a poor night's sleep.
- If needed, use a natural sleep aid, like the Revitalizing Sleep Formula.
- If your mind is wide awake at bedtime, you can also add Sleep Tonight!
- If needed, the medications Flexeril (3 mg), Neurontin (100-300 mg), Desyrel (25-50 mg) and/or Lyrica (150-300 mg) can also help sleep. Using these low doses decreases the risk of side effects and can be combined with the natural therapies.

2. Take a good multivitamin that includes zinc.

I recommend the Energy Revitalization System which includes not only zinc, but about 50 other important nutrients. In addition, take 20 extra mg of zinc for three months to 'refill your zinc tank.'

3. Starve the candida – cut back on sugar.

Candida feed on sugar. An easy way to start cutting back on your intake of the sweet stuff? Limit (or completely eliminate) your intake of the four types of foods that are loaded with added sugar: 1) fast food, 2) processed food, 3) sodas, and 4) fruit juices and drinks.

4. Save antibiotics for when they're really needed.

For example, sinus problems almost never require a dose of antibiotics. Neither do colds, which are a viral (not a bacterial) infection.

5. Take a probiotic.

Probiotics help normalize gut bacteria. I recommend the form of acidophilus called Pearls Elite from Enzymatic Therapy. Take 1 pearl a day for 3-5 months, and then 1 every other day.

6. Take plant-based digestive enzymes.

This not only promotes healthy digestion, but also takes a massive load off your immune system. I recommend the product CompleteGest®.

7. Use an immune-boosting supplement.

My favorite is ProBoost™, which includes an ingredient that mimics Thymulin, a critical immune-balancing hormone. Take this daily for at least 3 months to optimize ongoing immune function (3x a day dissolved under your tongue; any that is swallowed is wasted).

8. Optimize adrenal function.

My favorite supplement for this: Adrenal Stress End, which includes a number of natural agents that strengthen the adrenal glands. This is especially important if you tend to get very irritable when hungry.

9. Get more sunshine.

It delivers vitamin D, a must for healthy immunity. In fact, the oft-heard advice to avoid sunshine has resulted in weakened immunity and, I believe, hundreds of thousands of deaths from conditions linked to poor immune function. As I always say, the best advice is to avoid sunburn, not sunshine. Go for a walk every day in the great outdoors. Your immune system will thank you!