

NUTRITION RESOURCES | FALL

Immune-Supporting Foods for Cold & Flu Season

No single food prevents a cold or the flu, but a well-fed immune system responds better when it's exposed to one. As the weather cools and we spend more time indoors together, these everyday foods are a simple, food-first way to support your body through the season — no supplements required.

KEY NUTRIENTS & WHERE TO FIND THEM

Nutrient	Why It Matters	Good Sources
Vitamin C	Supports immune cell function	Citrus, bell peppers, broccoli, strawberries
Zinc	Helps immune cells communicate	Pumpkin seeds, beans, poultry, yogurt
Vitamin D	Often runs low as daylight decreases	Fatty fish, fortified milk, eggs
Probiotics	Support gut health, tied to immunity	Yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi
Protein	Needed to build antibodies	Lean meats, beans, lentils, eggs

EASY WAYS TO ADD THESE THIS FALL

- Add bell pepper strips or broccoli to your lunch — both have more vitamin C than an orange.
- Keep a bag of pumpkin seeds at your desk for a zinc-rich afternoon snack.
- Swap one dinner a week for salmon, trout, or another fatty fish.
- Choose yogurt with “live and active cultures” on the label for a probiotic boost.
- Build a pot of soup with beans, lentils, or shredded chicken — an easy way to get protein, zinc, and vegetables in one bowl.
- Keep frozen vegetables on hand for weeks when fresh produce trips don't happen — they're frozen at peak ripeness and just as nutritious.

A NOTE ON SUPPLEMENTS

Food is the best first step, since whole foods deliver nutrients alongside fiber and other compounds a pill can't replicate. If you're considering a vitamin C, zinc, or vitamin D supplement, check with your doctor first — some interact with medications or aren't needed if you're already eating a varied diet.

SOURCES

NIH Office of Dietary Supplements. "Dietary Supplements for Immune Function and Infectious Diseases – Consumer." ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/ImmuneFunction-Consumer
NIH Office of Dietary Supplements. "Vitamin C – Consumer." ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminC-Consumer
NIH Office of Dietary Supplements. "Zinc – Consumer." ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Zinc-Consumer

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