

Maximise immunity through nutrition

Part of the bodies adaptation to hard or long (90 minutes and over) training sessions involves an increase of hormones and proteins which can place you more at risk of illness and infection. Adequate sleep, remaining stress free, as well as maximising your nutrient intake will help protect from viruses and bacteria which cause colds and influenza.

Great news... but how can you maximise your intake of these nutrients?

There is no miracle pill here in fact, over supplementation with some vitamins does you more damage than good!...Focus on lots of coloured fruit, vegetables, beans, legumes, grains, animal meats, oils (canola, olive, walnut) added to your potato, rice, pasta, rice and cereals... too easy!

**Zinc, iron,
magnesium,
manganese,
selenium, copper,
vitamins A, B6, B12
& C along with
carbohydrates and
protein all play an
essential role in
immune function**

Probiotics and antioxidants may reduce risk of upper respiratory tract infections and can be found in the foods listed above along with probiotic yoghurts.

Snack on small handful of nuts and try some hearty winter soups or healthy casseroles and hot pots. See how many colours you can get into the meal. Vitamins, minerals and antioxidants come in a variety of colours; the more colours you have on your plate the better your intake and absorption of these compounds.

Keep Hydrated...

Your saliva contains proteins which act as antimicrobials, these great little proteins help kill bugs. During exercise your saliva secretion can decrease. Keeping hydrated throughout the day, especially during training will help to protect against infective bacteria and viruses. Keep your water bottle with you throughout the day and sip at regular intervals.

Hopefully you don't need reminding, however, general hygiene such as washing hands regularly and brushing teeth also plays important in part in immunity. Avoid sharing drink bottles, cutlery and towels.

FOOD FIGHT!

1 bag of crisps versus 1 tub low fat fruit yoghurt with handful of almonds

As well as probiotics, the yoghurt & nuts offers 10x the zinc, 2.5x the iron, 6.5x the magnesium, 12x the selenium, 7.5x the copper, 11 grams more protein and 8 grams more carbohydrates than the crisps. It also has probiotics and healthy fats to offer. In fact, crisps win on vitamin C & B6 only.

And the gold goes to..... Yoghurt and nuts.

