

Ayurveda - Health notes

Immunity Booster

As winter approaches it's a good time to think about strengthening your immunity. According to Maharishi Ayurveda, cold weather doesn't have to bring on the cold and flu. The key is to start now with immunity-enhancing meals.

What are immunity-enhancing foods? Any food that transforms quickly into ojas is good for immunity. If food creates ama, it's bad for immunity.

Ojas is the end product of complete digestion that creates radiant good health, stable emotions, and immunity. Ama, the digestive impurities caused by eating hard-to-digest foods or by unhealthy eating habits, creates the opposite effect--it compromises immunity and health.

Maharishi Ayurveda uses the seed-land theory to explain how immunity works. In this analogy, the human body is like the land, and infection is the seed. Ama and other impurities make the body fertile for infection. If you want to keep the seeds of infection from sprouting, you must take care to create ojas in your body, not ama.

Here are seven ways to boost the immune factor of your meals from The Council of Maharishi Ayurveda Physicians.

1. Choose intelligent, easy-to-digest foods. Intelligent foods include fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and light dairy products. If you choose fresh, whole foods that are not altered by processing, then your meal is going to wake up the intelligence of nature and convert quickly to ojas.

Foods that are processed, canned, frozen or packaged are harder to digest, and thus create ama. Also, because they are old, denatured by processing, or include harmful ingredients such as chemical preservatives, you could even call them dumb foods, because they no longer contain nature's intelligence. Rather, they create ama and block nature's intelligence from reaching the cells.

Organically grown foods are best because not only are they free of harsh chemicals, but they also contain more minerals. Vegetarian proteins such as panir (homemade cheese), milk, and pulses (split-mung dhal, lentils and other small, split beans) enhance ojas and immunity. Meat is not a recommended protein because it is difficult to digest and creates ama.

2. Cook with immune-boosting spices. Cook your food in a way that doesn't disturb the food's natural intelligence. For instance, if you add mild spices to cooked vegetables, grains and legumes, the food will convert more quickly to ojas. Spices add good flavor and have a yogavahi property, which means that they support digestion and make the nutrients easily available to the body.

Different spices also have specific immune-boosting properties. Turmeric has an immune-modulating effect because it is detoxifying and enhances the intelligence of the immune cells. Cumin burns ama. Black pepper clears the channels so ojas can reach the deeper tissues.

Immunity Spice Mix

Immunity Spice Mix

From *The Answer to Cancer* by Hari Sharma, M.D. and James Meade, Ph.D.

- * 6 parts turmeric
- * 3 parts ground cumin
- * 3 parts ground coriander
- * 6 parts ground fennel
- * 1 part powdered, dry ginger
- * 1 part ground black pepper
- * 1/4 part ground cinnamon

~~Benefits:~~ **Benefits: heal**

Amrit from Maharishi Ayurveda is excellent for strengthening natural defenses year-round. Herbs, if properly combined and processed, offer the concentrated intelligence of nature. Harnessing their power can help bolster your physiology

- * Mix the spices together well.
- * Heat one teaspoon of the spice mixture in one tablespoon of ghee, using medium-high heat, until the mixture releases an aroma. Remove from the heat immediately so it won't burn.
- * Add this spiced ghee to cooked rice, vegetables, or other foods.

3. Eat immune-boosting foods. Apples support the immune system because they contain antioxidants and both insoluble and soluble fiber, which cleanse the bowel. All sweet, juicy

It's also important to eat your meals at the same time every day. Your digestion gets used to a routine, and becomes more efficient.

6. Eat the proper quantity. Eating the right amount for your body type--not too much or too little--enhances ojas and supports the immune system. Maharishi Ayurveda recommends that you sip a cup of room-temperature water with your meals, so the meal is part liquid. Eat to only 3/4 of your capacity, in order to leave some space for the digestive process to take place. If you eat until you are really full, it creates discomfort and ama.

7. Choose foods for your body type and for the season. It's not correct that you can eat anything you want, as long as it's good food. If you want to stay healthy, you need to choose foods that will bring balance to your body type and for the particular season. Whatever influences from the weather and climate is causing an imbalance, you need to counteract them with the food you eat.

Eating cold salads in winter (Vata season), for instance, is not a good idea, because raw salads only increase the cold, dry, light qualities of Vata, when what is needed is a warming, grounding, nourishing diet.

Herbs that heal

Amrit from Maharishi Ayurveda is excellent for strengthening natural defenses year-round. Herbs, if properly combined and processed, offer the concentrated intelligence of nature. Harnessing their power can help bolster your physiology