

Nutritional needs in Winter: boost immunity!

Our immune system relies on both micro and macronutrients for optimal functioning, so here's a list of nutrients that can help you 'eat for immunity'.

- Vitamin A regulates immune responses, and a deficiency in this fat-soluble vitamin has a negative impact on immune system function and increases risk of invasion by pathogens. Rich sources of Vitamin A include; liver, cod liver oil, butter/margarine, cheddar cheese and eggs.
- Vitamin B6 plays a role in the production of protein and a deficiency in this water-soluble vitamin impairs the functioning of immune system cells. Rich sources of Vitamin B6 include; bananas, potatoes, chicken, chickpeas and pork.
- Vitamin B12 is a water-soluble vitamin and a deficiency can suppress immune function. Rich sources of Vitamin B12 include; liver, sardines, mackerel, salmon, beef and lamb.
- Vitamin C acts as an antioxidant to immune cells and stimulates leukocyte function. Evidence indicates the daily consumption of 200mg or more may reduce the severity and duration a cold within the general population. Rich sources of this water-soluble vitamin include; guava, capsicum, kiwi, orange, cabbage and broccoli.



- Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin and research suggests that a deficiency in this nutrient may play a role in chronic inflammation and associated chronic diseases. Vitamin D can be produced by the body from sunlight and food sources include; cod liver oil, salmon, sardines and 'Vitamin D mushrooms'.



- Vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin that acts as an antioxidant. While a deficiency in this nutrient is detrimental to our immune system, excessive intakes should be avoided. You can get 7mg of Vitamin E in 30g of almonds alone!



- Zinc is a mineral essential for immune function. Rich sources include; oysters, beef, lamb and scallops.

- Other nutrients including protein and vitamin B9 (also known as folate) are involved in the healthy functioning of our immune systems.

References:

1. <http://www.pennutrition.com/KnowledgePathway.aspx?kpid=16006&trcatid=38&trid=18279>
2. <https://www.nrv.gov.au/nutrients>

