

Boost Immunity with these Popular Veggies: Using the Pandemic to Grow

By Allison Walsh

We are being urged by health officials to practice social distancing, wash our hands more often and avoid touching our eyes, nose and mouth during this current pandemic. Common sense adds that we must do all we can to keep our bodies and our immune systems as healthy as we can, in the chance that we do encounter viruses, despite our best efforts not to.¹

Remember, your doctor knows best when it comes to the best immunity-promoting foods or supplements, and that while many are believed to be helpful, none have been scientifically proven to boost immunity... yet. That being said, encourage a healthy immune system and overall wellness by committing to healthier choices. You've heard it all before, but the list deserves repeating:

- **Don't smoke—and if you need help kicking the habit, find inspiration from Combined Insurance team members who quit for good**
- **Eat more fruits and veggies**
- **Make healthy sleep a priority**
- **Wash your hands regularly to limit germ exposure**
- **If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation**
- **Exercise often, either through planned workouts or physically-challenging chores like lawn care or house cleaning**
- **Drink plenty of water**
- **Reduce stress**

Next up, incorporate foods with immune-supportive properties into your diet, like these:

Healthy bacteria

Probiotics are found in most yogurts (check the labels for words like Lactobacillus reuteri, Streptococcus thermophilus, Lactobacillus bulgaricus, Lactobacillus acidophilus, Bifidus, Lactobacillus casei and Lactobacillus) and

fermented foods like sauerkraut and kimchi. These live cultures promote a healthy gut and in the case of Lactobacillus reuteri, increased white blood cells that fight infection.²

Garlic

This tasty relative of the onion contains a compound called allicin that contains potent medical properties. Studies show garlic may do all kinds of good – fighting off the common cold, but more impressively, lowering blood pressure and Alzheimer’s risk. But if you want the health-promoting properties of garlic, you have to shoot for the recommended dose of one clove, two to three times a day. Mince it into soups, stews and sauces for a flavorful kick. Once you make it a habit, it’s easy to add it to almost any savory recipe. ³

Sweet potatoes

When you think about keeping your body healthy, your skin may not come to mind, but it should. The skin is your most exposed organ, over 16 feet of it meets the elements each day. Keep your skin’s connective tissue healthy by eating foods rich in Vitamin A, like sweet potatoes. This delicious root veggie, good for breakfast, lunch, dinner and even dessert, packs an immune-supportive punch by delivering 40 percent of your daily recommended amount in every half cup. Carrots, squash and canned pumpkin offer similar benefits.⁴

Mushrooms

Fungi increase the activity of white blood cells, likely making them more active in fighting disease. Shitake, maitake and reishi varieties are reported to be most effective in boosting immunity. Just like garlic, sauté them in the soups, stews and sauces, or add them into eggs, warm salads or on top of grilled or broiled proteins.^{4,6}

Cruciferous vegetables

Vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, kale and cabbage deliver big when it comes to promoting intestinal health. A protein called aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AhR) protects the digestive system from outside pollutants and another, Cyp1a1, encourages immunity in the gut. Roast broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage, or chop them into kale salads, to get your fix. ^{5,7}

Don’t miss these healthy eating ideas:

- [Efrain's Jicama Salad: A Powerhouse Addition to Any Summer Meal](#)
- [Farmer's Market Vegetable Soup](#)
- [Fall in Love With These Inflammation-Fighting Foods](#)

We are thinking about you, our valued online community. It is times like these that unite all of us in this human experience. During these challenging times, we sincerely hope that you stay healthy and that your lives are minimally impacted.

This blog post is intended for educative and entertainment purposes only. It should not be construed as medical advice or a solicitation.

References:

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