

Stress and the Immune System



When we think about keeping our immune system in check, we often think about what we eat and what our system gets exposed to. It is always a good idea to give your immune system the nutrition it needs to function properly as well as do what you can to protect it from harmful bacteria, like washing your hands for at least 20 seconds. However, something we should take into more consideration is the effect of stress on the immune system. Managing your stress and your body's reaction to it is key to supporting

daily immune health. Here is why.

What Stress Does to the Body

It is important to note that stress on its own does not compromise your immune system, but how your body reacts to stress can affect your immunity in a negative way. When your body is stressed, your heart rate and blood pressure can go up, increasing the strain on your circulatory system, which distributes billions of cells that defend against antigens like bacteria and viruses. Stress also disturbs your digestive system, one of the main powerhouses of your immune system where trillions of healthy bacteria help your body process food, fight inflammation, and maintain homeostasis (balance of the body).

Supporting Your Immune System by Managing Stress

While you cannot take away stress completely, you can do what you can to help your body adapt to it. Here are some tips for supporting your immune system by managing your body's reaction to stress.

- **Avoid unhealthy coping habits.** Fight the temptation to drink, smoke, or stress-eat sugary, fried, or fast foods when you are stressed. They may bring you comfort, but ultimately, they'll have a negative effect on your immune health.
- **Maintain a nutritious, balanced diet.** Instead of stress-eating, you want to have a diet that is full of vitamins, minerals, and protein to support your body's overall health. When under stress, the body uses up its resources faster, so it is important to provide what your body needs to adapt. You can also take supplements like [Stress Relief Complex*](#) with ashwagandha, a traditional herb used to help the body adapt to heightened stress.*
- **Practice stress management techniques.** Take 10 to 15 minutes out of the day to meditate, do deep breathing exercises, or relax your muscles to help calm your body and keep your stress down.
- **Do some exercise.** Physical activity can help to relax your muscles and relieve tension in the body. Since your body and mind are intricately linked, if your body feels better, your mind does too. Exercise also helps your mind focus, interrupting the flow of worries running through your head when you are anxious.
- **Get plenty of sleep.** Getting enough sleep (at least 8 hours a day) can help lower your stress and improve your mood and cognitive function.
- **Reach out to people.** Spending time with your family and friends can do wonders to lower your stress. It helps to talk to others and get a fresh perspective on the stress you're dealing with.

Support your immune system this season by managing stress, staying positive, and keeping up your nutrition routine every day. Be well and be healthy!

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.
