

VITAMINS & SUPPLEMENTS FOR ENHANCING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM



You may be an extremely healthy person already, and chances are you take pretty good care of yourself (or at least you are willing to start) if you are reading this article. Smart lifestyle choices can make a huge difference in your ability to stay strong and healthy. But even the healthiest among us are not always able to fight off every little bug that comes down the pike. With the changing of the seasons and added stresses in our lives as summer comes to a close, we all could use a little boost to our immune system.

There are so many wonderful, natural supplements out there that are available at our local health food and grocery stores. You may not know about all of the options you have, so let's look at them more closely.

Mushroom Supplements

One immunity booster that has become extremely popular is derived from a delicious food mushrooms. Specifically, the mushroom species shiitake and maitake are very effective remedies for the immune system.

They have even been recommended by doctors in the medical community as well as the alternative health fields for cancer patients. This is because these mushrooms are thought to boost immune system response and increase the production of antibodies, as well as slow down the activity of free radicals in the body. This is of utmost import for cancer patients, but it is also beneficial for those of us who do not suffer from this disease.

People with autoimmune deficiency diseases such as AIDS or cancer are not the only people who benefit from an enhanced immune system. A healthy, well-functioning immune system is what keeps us from getting sick, and also helps us to feel our best on a daily basis, even if we are free from any serious disease.

Zinc Supplements

Zinc is a mineral that has become popular in many different forms to treat the common cold. While it is an essential mineral, and you can get zinc from food sources such as beans, seafood, dairy and nuts, the Food and Drug Administration has realized how important zinc is and has required it to be added to other foods such as grains, breads and cereals.

Most of the high-level zinc foods are found in certain seafood, such as oysters and crab, which some people do not wish to eat. Therefore, some of our more popular carbohydrates have been fortified with zinc by the product manufacturer.

An even easier way to make sure you get your zinc is to buy a daily supplement. You can take it in pill form or a lozenge. That way you can avoid foods that don't appeal to you. If you take a 10 mg per day dosage, this should do the trick for warding off the common cold and helping your immune system.

Echinacea Supplements

Echinacea is another great immune system enhancer. This is an herb, and although its popularity has really just increased in the last ten years or so, it has actually been used for medicinal purposes in this country and others for over a century. Its harvesting has become so popular, in fact, that some states are considering making the plant an endangered species.

Although many people start to use Echinacea when they feel themselves becoming run down or sick, the best way to take Echinacea is to do so preventatively. Especially during the winter months, it is a wonderful supplement to prevent cold and flu. Echinacea is sometimes found in a compound that includes another herb called goldenseal. This combination can do wonders to fortify the immune system.

Green Tea Supplements

A pleasant and tasty way to boost your immune system is to drink plenty of green tea. Green tea is fantastic for your immune system, and can even promote calmness and relaxation while increasing your metabolism. It contains antioxidants called polyphenols and catechins, which help to improve the overall health of the body.

Beneficial polyphenols similar to these are found in other sources such as red wine, but obviously red wine should not be consumed as freely as green tea, which you can drink all day long if you choose. One of the reasons green tea is calming is that it contains an amino acid called theanine, which helps to counteract the effect of the caffeine on the nervous system. If you choose to purchase a green tea supplement in capsule form instead, you look for one that provides about 200 mg of polyphenols per capsule or dose.

In a day and age where we are exposed to many free radicals and pollutants in our environment, it is a great comfort to know that a more efficient, better immune system is really only a supplement or two away. ●

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