

What is immune health?



WHAT IS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM?

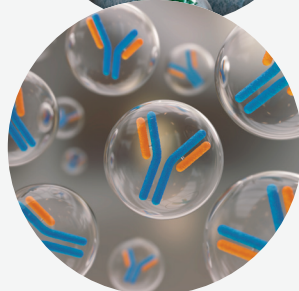
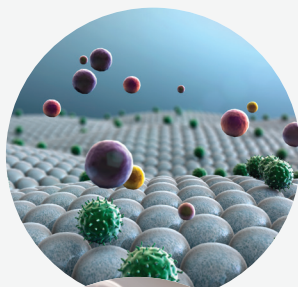
The immune system is made up of different organs, cells and chemicals that all play a role in protecting us from foreign microorganisms. Even our skin and gut form part of our immune defence system.¹⁻²

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The immune system is activated when the body recognises something that is not meant to be there. When this happens, the immune cells attach to the foreign matter.

Once our immune system encounters a microorganism for the first time, it stores information about it and how to fight it. This way, if we come into contact with it again, our immune system will know how to fight it straight away. Your immune system is always learning and adapting; therefore, our immune system is its ability to resist and protect us from particular microorganisms.

This is how vaccines work; they expose your immune system to a small amount of a microorganism (not harmful) so that your body is able to recognise it and fight it, if it is exposed to it in the future.³



It's also important to remember that overall nutrition status, and pattern of food intake (comprised of foods, nutrients and non-nutritive bioactive compounds) impact the functioning of the immune system.⁵

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM?



Eat well: Healthy immune system warriors need good, regular nourishment. In your diet, include a diversity of fruits and vegetables. These are rich in nutrients such as: zinc, selenium, iron, copper, magnesium, folic acid, and vitamins A, B6, C & D. A healthy, well-balance diet can influence the functioning of the immune system.



Take care of your gut health: The gut can be an entry point to pathogens. Gut microbiota work together with the immune system to maintain our health.



Keep active: Exercise can act on the immune system in multiple ways that include, reduction of inflammation and stress.



Minimize stress: The stress response is the body's way to keep safe, but stress can also lead to an increased and over reaction to triggers, including immune response.



Sleep well: Getting enough sleep is important. During sleep, your immune system releases proteins called cytokines. Cytokines are necessary when responding to infection or inflammation.