

- The Immune System -

Have you ever noticed how some people seem to catch every nasty bug that comes around whereas others never seem to fall ill and are full of energy? Or some people tend to be affected by a range of different allergies when others live their lives allergy free? Everybody's immune systems are different and it's important to make yours as strong as possible to fight off infections, germs and possibly even cancer.

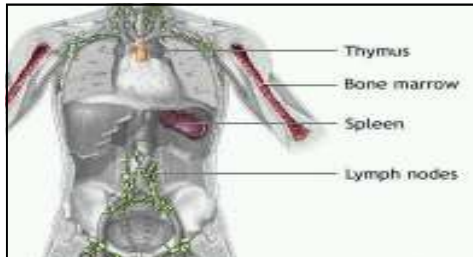
The immune system is composed of many interdependent cell types that collectively protect the body from bacterial, parasitic, fungal and viral infections, the growth of tumor cells and the destruction of virus-infected cells. There are certain sites where the cells of the immune system are organised into specific structures. These are classified as central lymphoid tissue (bone marrow, thymus) and peripheral lymphoid tissue (lymph nodes, spleen).

Bone Marrow: All the cells of the immune system are derived from stem cells in the bone marrow. Bone marrow is the soft tissue found in the hollow interior of bones. In adults, marrow in large bones produces new blood cells, both red (deliver oxygen from the lungs to body tissues via blood) and white (cells of the immune system which defend the body against both infectious disease and foreign materials).

Thymus: Is a lymphoid organ that is situated in the centre of the upper chest cavity. It is in the Thymus that lymphocytes (immature white blood cells) mature and become T cells; a type of mature white blood cell that acts like soldiers in the body that seek out and destroy targeted invaders.

Spleen: Is an organ located in the abdomen and has two main functions; acting as part of the immune system and as a filter. The spleen functions in the destruction of old red blood cells and holds a reservoir of blood. It is regarded as one of the centers of activity in the immune system.

Lymph Nodes: Lymph nodes are small bean shaped structures lying along the course of the lymphatic system. They are filters or traps for foreign particles and contain white blood cells. The lymphatic system is a major component of the immune system.



Some common conditions that can occur when your immune system is down include;

- **Colds**
- **Flu**
- **Fatigue**
- **Stomach bugs**
- **Skin cancers**
- **Toxoplasmosis** - a disease caused by a parasite that can be dangerous for pregnant women or people with weakened immune systems. Symptoms can range from swollen glands, to aching muscles, to brain, eye or organ damage

Apart from making you susceptible to colds and flu's, a weakened immune system, if not taken care of, can become overactive. When overactive immune responses occur in the body, it is known as an **autoimmune disease**. This is where the immune system actually attacks parts of you. There are over 100 diseases that fit into the autoimmune disease group, where the body's own immune system gets confused and begins to attack good body cells.

Examples of this are;

- **Multiple Sclerosis** - the immune system is attacking the myelin sheath

(a conductive covering that helps increase the speed of signals from the mind to the body)

- **Rheumatoid Arthritis** - the immune system is attacking the synovial membrane between the joints
- **Lupus** - the immune system attacks normal tissue affecting various parts of the body especially the skin, joints, blood and kidneys
- **Asthma**
- **Allergies** - food, drug, insect sting, latex, peanut, penicillin, or skin
- **Anaphylaxis** - a serious allergic reaction which often involves more than one body system (e.g. skin, respiratory, gastro-intestinal, cardiovascular)
- **Eczema**
- **Hives**
- **Hay fever**

There are many different factors that can weaken your immune system and what you **don't** want is to end up with an autoimmune disease because of it. Once your body becomes weakened it takes quite a bit of work to get it back into tip-top shape, that's why it's extremely important to take care of yourself;

- **Exercise** (sufficient but not excessive)
- **Stress management**
- **High quality multivitamin** (especially B6, B12, folate, C, zinc, selenium)
- **Plenty of sleep** - at least 8 to 10 hours per night
- **Well balanced diet** - plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, grains and meats

Help yourself to be one of those people that never get sick - your body will thank you in the long run.



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Immune Boost!

Right. So you're tired of being the one that's always sick and you've finally made the decision to get your health on track. As they say, the best treatment is often prevention so... where do you start?

Drink plenty of water - This helps to flush the body of toxins and keep you hydrated. Technically we are supposed to drink 2 to 3 litres of water every day. Make sure you have a water bottle on you at all times to sip on during the day - you'll be surprised how quickly 2 litres will go. Also, by adding freshly squeezed lemon juice to your water, you're helping to maintain the body's internal climate at a PH level which supports healthy bacteria instead of viruses and bacteria which thrive in more acidic environments.

A good nights sleep - Getting between 8 to 10 hours sleep per night is important for balanced hormone levels (human growth hormone levels, stress hormone levels), emotional balance and keeping weight down. Just like the rest of your body, your organs need rest so that they can be at their peak during the day.

Exercise - Disease is often followed by blockages in your system, and the best way to get your body flowing properly is to get your body moving. 30 minutes of moderate to high energy exercise is recommended per day - yet rest is also necessary so make sure you don't push yourself too hard.

Curb your stress - Everybody knows that excess stress is bad for your health, and Science has now discovered that every cell in the body has a receptor for the substances produced when we are happy - hence the truth in "laughter is the best medicine". By reducing your stress levels and developing a positive outlook on life you automatically increase your health.



Eat fruit and vegetables - It seems in everything we read we are being told to "eat a balanced diet, eat lots of fruit, eat your vegetables..." and there is a very good reason for it! Eating a healthy diet is extremely important for every part of your body. Every organ, bone, cell and tissue in your body **need** the vitamins and minerals derived from fresh food to function properly and to keep you healthy.

Vitamins and Minerals - Because these days it's hard to get our hands on farm fresh foods, our bodies are not receiving the same amount of goodness out of the foods that we're eating. That's why taking a good multivitamin and strong multi-B vitamin can be very beneficial - especially one with immune boosting properties (such as the Ki—Immune Defence & Vitality Formula, containing astragalus, shiitake mushroom and olive leaf available from our clinic). You'll be surprised how much of a difference they make.

Enjoy a massage - According to The Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami in the US, receiving a massage can boost the immune system. In one study, 20 men infected with HIV were given 45 minute massages five days a week for one month. At the end of the month, the men had less anxiety and their immune functions had improved. Studies on women with breast cancer and also on premature babies have shown similar results.

Acupuncture - Is a great way to give your immune system a boost. By supporting all your internal organ systems, acupuncture helps to unblock blockages in your system and get all your meridians flowing and functioning properly. Plus it's a great way to relax and allow your body to wind down.

SUSAN MAUGHAN OUR NEW CHINESE ACUPUNCTURIST

Susan is a fully qualified acupuncturist with a Bachelor of Health Science (Acupuncture) which included an Internship at the Guangxi Traditional Chinese Medical University in China. She draws on her skills in acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping, gua sha Chinese herbs and oriental massage techniques to help her clients restore their health.

Susan is available **Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday.**

"B" Healthy - Thrive with Vitamins!

Vitamin	Helps	Food Source
B1	Memory, decreases sugar cravings, Multiple Sclerosis	Yeast extract, peas, oranges, wholewheat pasta, wholewheat breads, egg yolk
B2	Anaemia, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	Lamb's liver, cheddar cheese, eggs, beef, chicken, yoghurt
B3	Diabetes, pregnancy, Heart Disease, acne	Chicken, pork, beef, wheatgerm, turkey

Vitamin	Helps	Food Source
B5	Heart health, wound healing, fatigue	Calves' liver, peanuts, tahini, sesame seeds, pecan nuts, walnuts
B6	PMS, Carpal Tunnel, depression	Wheatgerm, wheatbran, cod, turkey, bananas, brussels sprouts
B12	Nerve health, Dementia, fatigue, Multiple Sclerosis	lamb's liver, pate, pork, eggs, beef, fortified cereals

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