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Boosting Your Immunity

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Boost your immunity
and stay healthy

Improve your overall health
and combat disease

Bounce back when your
immunity is compromised

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coauthor of *Living Paleo For Dummies*



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by Dr. Wendy Warner and
Dr. Kellyann Petrucci

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Introduction

You're probably familiar with the many diet plans, books, infomercials, and products on the market that have one goal in mind: to get you skinnier. Okay, fair. But what if you could get the same results by just getting healthy and staying healthy? What if you could look better, feel better, *and* experience fewer cold and flu symptoms or other illnesses just by making simple diet and lifestyle changes that boost your immunity? The simple truth is that when you boost your immunity, you *can* have it all.

When you begin to eat and live in a way that boosts your immunity, you naturally remove inflammatory foods as well as the foods that don't move you toward health. You begin eating true *superfoods* — foods rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidant power that make you feel better than you may have in years. What overall effect does boosting your immunity have in your life? You'll have reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancers, colds, flus, and other illnesses. You'll have more energy, look younger, lose weight, get stronger, and sleep more soundly.

The immune-boosting plan isn't a diet in the traditional sense, although we do ask you to give up certain foods — sometimes just for a short time and, in some cases, indefinitely. Although that may sound intimidating, this book shows you the reasons you should avoid certain foods for optimal health. We also provide plenty of practical tips to make the transition as easy as possible for you and your family. From how to stock your kitchen cupboards to how to stay healthy while you travel, from reversing disease to exercising wisely, you'll find everything you need to adopt an immune-boosting lifestyle.

About This Book

Embracing a healthier paradigm may feel overwhelming at first, but *Boosting Your Immunity For Dummies* helps you understand the benefits of living an immune-boosting life. In this book, we explain the underlying science of how the immune system works and define all its parts and functions. We pay special attention to what happens when your immune system gets off track and what you can do about it.

We break down the patterns of an immune-boosting lifestyle so you know exactly where to begin, and we help you understand just what to include in your diet to reach your goals. Whether you're trying to get healthy, stay healthy, lose weight, reverse a medical condition, fight aging, or improve your energy, you'll find the information you need to succeed. We also explain the nutritional aspects of the immune-boosting lifestyle and answer your questions about superfoods, herbs, vitamins, minerals, supplements, and more.

Because boosting your immunity goes beyond the food that you put on your plate, we also explore how you can improve your sleep, enhance your cells through detoxing, and benefit from immune-boosting breathing and moving.

If you're more interested in practical application than scientific theories, we've got you covered there, too, with chapters that outline how to revamp your kitchen for boosting immunity and how to plan and stock your kitchen for the nutritionally superior immune-boosting foods.

And finally, *Boosting Your Immunity For Dummies* wouldn't be complete without plenty of delicious,

satisfying recipes to help you and your family make the transition to living healthier. The recipes will keep you nutritionally fed from breakfast through dinner with healthy snacks in between and even a few dessert recipes for those special occasions when you want something a little sweeter than usual. We also share a lot of easy meal ideas that don't require a recipe at all.

Conventions Used in This Book

We use the following conventions throughout the text to make things consistent and easy to understand:

- » All web addresses appear in `monofont`.
- » When this book was printed, some web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that we didn't put in any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So when using one of these web addresses, just type in exactly what you see in this book, pretending the line break doesn't exist.
- » We use **boldface** to highlight keywords in bulleted lists and the action parts of numbered steps.

Here are some specific recipe-related conventions that apply throughout the book:

- » Vegetarian recipes are marked with a tomato in the Recipes in This Chapter list.
- » Temperatures are all given in degrees Fahrenheit. (If you prefer working in the metric system, turn to the appendix for help converting temperatures to Celsius.)
- » All eggs are large, unless noted otherwise.

What You're Not to Read

We've written this book so you can find information easily and quickly. Each chapter covers one aspect of boosting immunity and includes specific details and practical tips to help you understand how to incorporate it into your new lifestyle. If you don't have the time (or the desire) to read every word, you can skim the text in the shaded sidebars. They provide interesting but not essential anecdotes and additional information.

Foolish Assumptions

As we wrote this book, we made the following assumptions about you:

- » You want to build your immune system to experience fewer colds, flus, and other illnesses or to manage some type of medical condition, lose weight, or fight aging, and you know that to achieve these goals, boosting your immunity makes sense.
- » You understand how to eat and live healthy, and you want your loved ones to enjoy a healthy, immune-boosting lifestyle, too.
- » You want to stop eating processed and unhealthy foods to feel younger, healthier, more vibrant, and happier.
- » You're interested in discovering how food affects you physically and mentally and how to live a healthier lifestyle but don't want to get bogged down in too much scientific detail.
- » You're open to the idea of making lifestyle changes — avoiding certain foods, making sleep a priority, and adopting healthy principles — to enhance your quality of life.

» You want to gain a better understanding of how the immune system works and what you can do if your immune system isn't functioning properly.

How This Book Is Organized

We've divided this book into five parts to make the different topics more manageable and easier to digest. Each part deals with certain aspects of boosting immunity and discusses the relevant topics.

Part 1: Getting to Know Your Immune System

If you're interested in starting with the basics, this part is for you. The first chapter gives a broad overview of living an immune-boosting lifestyle, pointing out all the ways your decisions impact your immune system. In this part, we explain the immune system in detail, from the many organs involved to the different cells and how they interact. If you're a bit of a science geek, this is the place for you.

Part 2: What Happens When Your Immune System Gets Off Track

Although most of the time the immune system functions well, other times it doesn't. If things go haywire, some disease states can develop. This part addresses the *hows* and *whys* of specific conditions, such as allergies, autoimmune conditions, and cancer, as well as immune-boosting suggestions specific to each. We also discuss immune deficiency states, both inherited and acquired, along with suggestions that help modify immune activity.

Also in this part, we discuss the impact of other medical conditions on the immune system and the immune system's impact on other medical conditions, showing

you how interconnected your overall health is to your immune system.

Part 3: Laying the Groundwork for Super Immunity: Nutrition, Lifestyle, and Detox

In these chapters, you find out why eating immune-boosting foods is the best choice for you and your family and how they can get you well and keep you well.

Tapping into the immune properties of superfoods is one of the most amazing tools you can use to improve your health. Packed with nutrients, they provide you with the deepest nutrition. However, living an immune-boosting lifestyle goes beyond food. Lifestyle patterns also make a difference, and the chapters in this part explore the principles of living an immune-friendly lifestyle. We also show how detoxing can work its magic in people who need a cellular cleanse.

Part 4: Cooking Up Recipes for Immunity and Wellness

Getting reacquainted with your kitchen can be a gift for you and your family. We live in a busy world filled with responsibility, and this section helps you overcome the obstacle of feeling overwhelmed when you're ready to jump back into your kitchen. [Chapter 13](#) provides tips on planning and stocking your kitchen. [Chapters 14](#) through [19](#) include a collection of delicious, comforting recipes to fill every meal (and your stomach) with healthy, energizing foods. You'll find recipes for easy breakfasts, lunches, dinners, side dishes, soups, salads, desserts, teas, and smoothies that will improve your health, energize your body, and help you live longer and stronger.

Part 5: The Part of Tens

Like all *For Dummies* books, this one includes the fun and exciting Part of Tens. Here, we list ten tips to avoid coming down with a cold or flu, ten ways to improve your breathing for a better immune system, ten exercises you can do anywhere, and finally ten ways to help your family adapt the immune-boosting lifestyle.

Icons Used in This Book

To make this book easier to navigate, we include the following icons to help you find key information about boosting your immunity.



TIP

This icon indicates practical information that can help you in your quest for improved health or in your progress in adopting an immune-boosting lifestyle.



REMEMBER

When you see this icon, you know that the information that follows is important enough to read twice!



WARNING

This icon highlights information that could be detrimental to your success if you ignore it. We don't use this one much, so pay attention when we do.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

This icon highlights interesting but optional information that's of a more scientific nature for those who want a little deeper perspective.

Where to Go from Here

This book is organized to be read in the way that makes the most sense to you, so feel free to jump around to the information that's most relevant to you right now. You can use the table of contents to find the broad categories of subjects or use the index to look up specific information.

Do you want to know more about the foods to boost immunity? You can get started in [Chapters 8](#) and [9](#). Are you ready to clean out your kitchen? Turn to [Chapter 13](#). Want to know about the immune-boosting supplements and herbs? Check out [Chapter 10](#), which provides an in-depth look at the nutritional underpinnings of supplementation. If you want to understand how your immune system works, jump right into [Chapters 1](#) and [2](#), or if you want to understand how to deal with an overactive immune system, go to [Chapter 4](#). If it's the recipes that interest you, [Chapters 14](#) through [19](#) are for you.

And if you're not sure where to begin, read [Part 1](#). It gives you the basic information you need to understand why and how boosting your immunity can help you improve your health and quality of life.

Part 1

Getting to Know Your Immune System

IN THIS PART ...

The pursuit of good health ultimately leads to the pursuit of a healthy immune system. This part makes clear all the ways your immune system affects your life as well as all the ways your day-to-day choices affect your immune system. The chapters in this part take you through the nitty-gritty details of the immune system and how the organs and cells interact so you understand what you can do to improve your immunity. Also, you come to understand all the ways your system can go wrong, so you can set it right again.

Chapter 1

Immunity: Your Ticket to a Stronger, Longer, and Healthier Life

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » **Boosting your immunity to keep you well**
 - » **Making changes for a healthier lifestyle**
 - » **Improving the way you look and feel**
-

Everything rises and falls on your immune system. When your immune system is strong, you avoid the pitfalls of disease, and your body expresses vitality and health. Your immune system is your shield — your most powerful protector.

Having your immune system operate at its best should be central in your life and the focus of your nutritional and lifestyle patterns. The secret to success is discovering practical tools and strategies to strengthen your immune system so it helps keep you healthy, lean, strong, and ageless.

Super Immunity 101

What does it mean to have *super immunity*? Super immunity is when your body's greatest protector — its immune system — is working to the best of its ability to get and keep you well. Having your cells express their super immunity potential can even save your life. Your

immune system casts a healing shield over you, protecting you from the simplest of challenges, like the common cold, to the most threatening, like cancer.

We're passionate about bringing the concept of immune boosting to the world because we've seen tremendous value in developing tools and healthy lifestyle practices that keep people in this super immune-healing cocoon. In the following sections, we introduce you to the concept of super immunity and how it can affect nearly every area of your life.

Starting with your immune system

No matter what your goals are — whether they're to get well, stay well, lose weight, or fight aging — it all starts with creating the healthiest cells possible. Discovering the tools to help your body create these healthy cells may be one of the most important things you do for yourself.

Life can be complicated. It can be hectic, busy, and exhausting to you and your body. These things are just a few of the challenges your immune system faces. No one enjoys being stuck in bed with frequent colds, yet many adults in the United States are about two to four times per year. Simple infections can turn life threatening, and the flu can turn into a more serious and prolonged illness. People are concerned about a worldwide spread of viral illnesses, and cancers are at an all-time high (men have a 44 percent chance of getting an invasive cancer, and women, about 37 percent).



REMEMBER Here's the good news: Research shows that you can make a difference in protecting yourself from these illnesses. Understanding how to eat and live better helps you strengthen your body's greatest protector so it knocks out disease and keeps you well before anything serious or life threatening has a chance to take hold. Of course, you do risk some side effects of having a strong and efficient immune system — you'll look and feel amazing!

Boosting your immunity with nutritional excellence

When you start eating and living for vibrant health, it shows. You have less down time, and you enjoy life on an entirely different level. If you're suffering, take comfort in knowing that eating your way to a stronger immune system will help you a great deal, and getting well really does start with nutritional excellence. [Chapters 8](#) and [9](#) explain what it means to eat foods with superior nutrition.



TIP Nutritional excellence happens when you eat foods with *a high nutrient density*, which means foods that have a lot of nutrients in relation to the amount of calories they contain. So with each bite, you're doing something positive to your body and strengthening that healing shield.

Unfortunately, the average American takes in about 60 percent of his calories from *low nutrient density foods* — processed foods that have added flavors, colors, sweeteners, rancid oils, and are a gluten-filled, flour-

filled dietary mess. When you eat these foods, every bite weakens your healing shield and opens yourself up to disease and premature aging.

Considering super immunity and modern medicine

According to former Surgeon General of the United States Dr. Richard Carmona, “Because of the increasing rates of obesity, unhealthy eating habits, and physical inactivity, we may see the first generation to be less healthy and have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.” That is an unbelievable statement — that this generation will be the first to *not* outlive their parents! This means that with all the drugs, surgeries, and advancement in medicine, we’re not getting any better. And now, the problem has trickled down to children.

Drugs were never designed to get you healthier. They were designed to get you out of crisis mode. Even though people have been marketed to think that more medical care means a longer, healthier life, that simply isn’t the truth. If you want health, that job is up to you. No shortcut or magic pill can do this for you. It’s about the lifestyle you choose to live.

Another problem with looking to modern medicine to get well and stay well is that taking medications does nothing to change behavior. In fact, it’s your behaviors or patterns every day that may be leading to you needing the medication in the first place. Relying on medication to make you feel better allows you to continue on the path you’re on, no matter how destructive it may be to your cells and overall health. Don’t let modern medicine be your permission for leading a life that isn’t serving you.

IMMUNE-BOOSTING SUCCESS STORY: DREW

Meet Drew, 56, horticulturist, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

Drew is the perfect example of someone who was a participant in his healing, which led to astonishing results. Drew's blood sugars were creeping up to alarming levels. He and his wife decided to take action and wanted to use effective strategies that were as close to natural as possible. They transitioned their kitchen into healthy, immune-boosting foods with lean meats, low-starch carbohydrates, some fruits, and healthy fats. Much to their surprise, they really enjoyed these foods and found the transition easy with so many great recipes. Drew's blood sugars started at 350 and, in just six months' time, have plummeted to the normal range of 90 to 110. Drew and his wife were even more shocked when they found his hemoglobin A1c (average blood sugars over the previous two to three months) went from 13.8 down to an astounding 6.6! Drew feels better than ever. Every spring, he'd get sick like clockwork, but that's a thing of the past. He no longer gets sick whatsoever. Through time, he has experienced deep healing and is noticing improvements in all areas of his life.



REMEMBER

You have to be a *participant* in your healing to get results. Modern medicine isn't the answer. Always try to get the best results in your life; the *recipient* of healthcare has to be the *participant* as well.

Living Longer, Stronger, and Healthier

It almost sounds too good to be true, but, yes, you can live longer, stronger, and healthier when you discover how to eat and live in a way that boosts your immunity. When you stop poisoning your cells with unhealthy foods,

you get rid of toxins and anything that your body can't use or eliminate. How quickly something leaves your body through your bowels says a lot about the health of that food. Certain foods cleanse you while others clog you. Eating foods that cleanse you keep you young, healthy, and beautiful, as you find out in the following sections.



REMEMBER When you balance your plate with lean, healthy meats, seafood, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, and naturally occurring healthy fats, like the ones shown in [Figure 1-1](#), and cut down your sugar intake, you get stronger, leaner, and healthier. We discuss the power of immune-boosting foods in [Chapters 8](#) and [9](#).

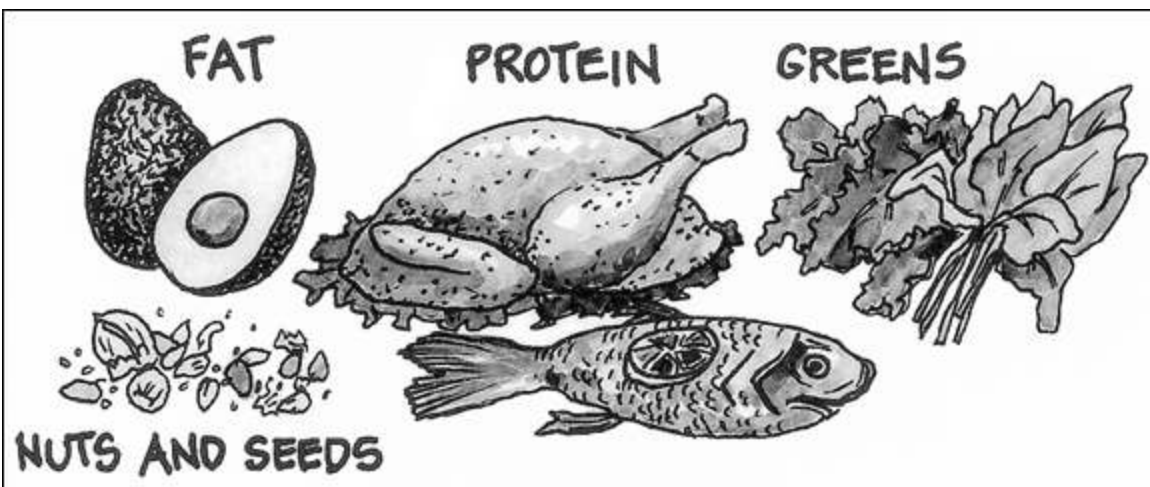


Illustration by Elizabeth Kurtzman

FIGURE 1-1: Immune-boosting foods.

Focusing on healthy cells

Healthy cells are different than cells under *oxidative stress* — the total burden of your cells by free radicals (unstable molecules responsible for tissue damaging and aging) in normal, everyday metabolism plus the added