

Nutrition and Immunity for Teens and Adults

The immune system is the body's defence against disease and infection, and a healthy, balanced diet with a variety of foods from the main food groups can help to keep it working properly. As well as nutrients such as protein and omega-3 fats, a number of vitamins and minerals have key roles in supporting our immune systems.

Staying healthy is important for our quality of life – to feel well, to be active and to be productive whether at work, school or university. So we need to look after our immune systems so that they can fend off infections wherever possible.

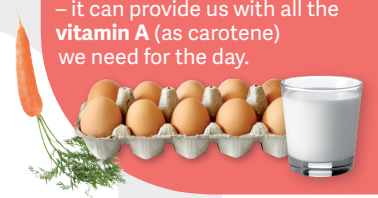
Vitamin A

Found in:

Eggs, cheese, liver. The body can also make vitamin A from beta-carotene, found in dark green leafy vegetables (e.g. spinach) and orange-coloured fruits and vegetables (e.g. carrots, sweet potato, butternut squash).

DID YOU KNOW?

Why not try a baked sweet potato – it can provide us with all the **vitamin A** (as carotene) we need for the day.



Vitamin B6

Found in:

Poultry, fish (e.g. tuna), some fruit and vegetables (e.g. bananas, avocados, Brussel sprouts, plantains), nuts and seeds (e.g. walnuts, cashews, sesame seeds).



DID YOU KNOW?

You can use nuts and seeds to top fruit and yogurt. Why not try plain unsalted peanuts in salads, stews and curries. A snack of walnuts (20g, 6 halves) provides around 10% of our daily **vitamin B6** requirement.

Vitamin B12

Found in:

Meat, fish, milk, cheese, eggs, fortified yeast extract, fortified breakfast cereals, fortified milk alternatives (e.g. soya, oat, almond drinks – check labels).

DID YOU KNOW?

Eggs are a good **vitamin B12** provider – 2 poached eggs will provide all the **vitamin B12** we need for the day.



Vitamin C

Found in:

Citrus fruits (e.g. easy peelers), grapefruit, berries, kiwi fruit, green vegetables (e.g. cabbage, kale), cauliflower, peppers, tomatoes.



DID YOU KNOW?

Serving a stir fry with a portion of sugar snap peas and a portion of red pepper will provide you with the required **vitamin C** for the day!



Vitamin D

Found in:

Oily fish, eggs, some fortified breakfast cereals, some fortified dairy and dairy alternative products (check labels).



DID YOU KNOW?

During the autumn and winter, the sun is not strong enough for the body to make **vitamin D** so we should eat foods rich in vitamin D and take a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of **vitamin D** during these months.



Copper

Found in:

Wholegrain breakfast cereals, wholewheat pasta, quinoa, prawns, pulses (e.g. beans, chickpeas, lentils), dried fruit, nuts.

DID YOU KNOW?

Pulses are good sources of **copper** in our diet. Why not use them in soups, stews, and curries?



Folate

Found in:

Green vegetables (e.g. broccoli, cabbage, spinach), chickpeas, oranges, berries, cheese, wholemeal bread.



DID YOU KNOW?

Green veg are often packed with **folate**; choose ones you like, whether it's peas (frozen are good and can save waste), plenty of lettuce, rocket and pak choi in stir fries.

Iron

Found in:

Red meat, pulses (e.g. kidney beans, lentils), nuts and nut butters, seeds and seed pastes (e.g. tahini), wholemeal bread, dried fruit (e.g. apricots).

DID YOU KNOW?

Surveys suggest around half of teenage girls and a quarter of women may have low **iron** intakes – we should all try and include a variety of food sources of iron in our diets.



Selenium

Found in:

Nuts and seeds (particularly Brazil nuts, cashews, sunflower seeds), eggs, poultry, fish, shellfish.



DID YOU KNOW?

Fish is a great **selenium** provider – we should be eating at least 2 portions of fish a week, 1 of which should be oily (e.g. salmon, sardines). If you are vegetarian, why not try a nut roast?



Zinc

Found in:

Red meat, poultry, cheese, some shellfish (like crab and mussels), nuts and seeds (like pumpkin seeds, pine nuts), wholegrain breakfast cereals, wholegrain and seeded breads.



DID YOU KNOW?

Wholegrains are a source of **zinc** so why not try having a wholegrain cereal (add some fruit to help get your 5 A DAY) or a cheddar cheese sandwich on wholegrain bread with plenty of salad.