

Looking to build up that immune system?
By Jade Roman '21



As you know, there are many over the counter products that claim to strengthen your immune system. Although I have nothing against these products, I strongly believe that the key to a healthy immune system is what you eat and how you spend your time. Stress, bad eating, and a sedentary life weaken your immunity, making it harder for your body to fight off illnesses and infections. Therefore, it is crucial to be proactive. Here are some things that you can do to boost your immune system and better your overall physical health.

1. Go for a walk – I know right? Something so simple is actually really healthy for your physical and mental well-being. Let me explain. When you walk outside, you are breathing in the fresh air. This opens up your lungs, which helps you to breathe better and also puts your mind at ease from stressful thinking. When you aren't stressed, your body has the natural ability to do its job, that is to protect you from germs that can pose a threat to your body.

Although it is better to walk in a rural area because the air is cleaner, as a substitute, you can take a walk at your local park or school track.

2. Sit outside and get some sun – Vitamin D3 is essential for your bone health and immune system. Also, studies suggest that Vitamin D3 can uplift your mood and lessen the effects of depression. You can always take a vitamin D3 supplement, but you can also get it naturally from the sun.

3. Try not to stress – According to Sarah Klein's "Stress, Adrenaline, Cortisol, Norepinephrine: The Three Major Stress Hormones, Explained," "Too much cortisol

can suppress the immune system, increase blood pressure and sugar, decrease libido, produce acne, contribute to obesity and more.” With that being said, DON’T STRESS.

4. Ginger- Ginger has many health benefits. It not only fights against upper respiratory infections, but lowers blood sugar levels, relieves menstrual pain, aids digestion, and more. To make ginger tea, cut up thin slices of ginger and put them into a pot full of water. Boil the ginger-infused water for 30 minutes to an hour. Pour the tea into a mug and add honey. You can drink this as often as you’d like. You may even nibble on the boiled ginger remains once you’ve had your tea. Just be aware that raw ginger can be very spicy.

5. Aloe – Aloe soothes the digestive tract, aids in gut health and is great for colds and flu. Growing up, whenever someone in the family was sick, my grandmother would use *sávil*a (Spanish for aloe) to restore our health. She would buy two to three aloe stalks, cut them open and place the gooey contents in a blender along with pure lemon juice and honey. It tastes absolutely terrible, but I kid you not, it works. I like to make a jar of *sávil*a and keep it in the fridge so that I can take a shot of it every morning. It's also good to have on hand if someone is sick in the house.

Again, what you put into your body and how you live your life matters. These tips will not make you invincible to the coronavirus or any illness that you may cross paths with, but they will help your body’s ability to fight them. Self-care comes in many forms. When we think of self-care, we sometimes only think of the mental component but the physical is just as important.