

Let's lunch and learn!

December 2025

If you participate in the State Health Plan, you can find a nutritionist near you by logging into your Aetna account.

Dietician visits are covered at 100 percent when an in-network provider is used. Visit www.shpnc.gov to learn more.

For future Worksite Wellness Lunch and Learn events or recordings of previous events, visit oshr.nc.gov/wellness-webinars.





Immunity Boosting Foods

Keeping You Healthy this Holiday Season And New Year!

By Katie Godin, RD, LDN

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Lifestyle Medical Centers offers Nutrition Counseling to assist with educating you on how to make positive lifestyle changes alongside continual support and encouragement.

- **Services offered:**
- Weight Management
- Women's Health
- Sports Nutrition
- Chronic Disease Counseling
- Bariatric Support
- Smoking Cessation
- Sleep Assessment and Stress Management

<https://lifestylemedicalcenters.com/>



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Evidence-based Lifestyle Modification
and Medical Nutrition Therapy



How Does A Balanced Diet Support Your Immune System?

- Essential nutrients from food will help provide the building blocks for your immune cells.
- Aids with gut health (70 percent of immune cells live in the gut).
- Reduces inflammation.
- Helps the body resist and recover from illness .



Top Immune Supporting Nutrients

- Vitamin C – Antioxidant; supports the production of white blood cells
- Vitamin D – Regulates immune response
- Vitamin A – Protects mucosal barriers (protective layers)
- Vitamin E – Strengthens cell membranes (ability to detect threats are strengthened)
- Zinc – Essential for immune cell growth
- Selenium – Antioxidant support
- Protein – Builds antibodies (fight infections)
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids – Reduces inflammation



Vitamin C:

- Citrus Fruits
- Kiwi
- Peppers
- Berries

Tip: Keep frozen berries around during winter months to add to smoothies or can throw into warm oats!

Vitamin D

- Sunshine
- Eggs
- Salmon
- Fortified Milk

Tip: You may need supplementation if you do not get sources in your diet daily. Ask your provider!





Zinc

- Beans
- Nuts & Seeds
- Whole Grains
- Meat
- Oysters (highest)

Tip: Mix pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, cashews and/or hemp seeds into homemade trail mix for a portable, zinc-rich snack!

Vitamin A

- Carrots
- Sweet potatoes
- Leafy Greens

Tip: Add sweet potatoes to your salad!



Selenium

- Brazil Nuts
- Tuna
- Whole Grains

Tip: For healthy tuna salad, try mixing in avocado for a burst of healthy fat!



Omega 3s

- Salmon
- Tuna
- Walnuts
- Chia Seeds

Tip: For my favorite salmon dish, check out this recipe!

<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/267223/walnut-rosemary-crusted-salmon/>



Protein

- Lean meats
- Eggs
- Legumes
- Tofu
- Yogurt

Tip: For an anti-inflammatory boost try this lovely lentil & veggie soup. It has 17g per serving of plant-based protein!

[Lentil & Vegetable Soup with Parmesan](#)



Importance of Gut Health

- 70 percent of immune cells reside in the digestive tract
- A healthy gut microbiome boosts immune response

Foods that help:

- **Probiotics (live bacteria)** : yogurt, kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut
- **Prebiotics (food sources for live bacteria to thrive)** : garlic, onions, bananas, oats

Tip: Try kefir as a base for smoothies and make sure to always have fresh garlic and onion around this time of year to add to any dish!



Hydration's Role

- Water helps to transport nutrients as well as remove toxins
- Moistens mucous membranes (first line of response)
- Aim for 6-8 glasses daily (minimum). Needs vary based on individual and activity level.

Tip: Warm soups & broths will count towards your fluid intake in the winter months!



Immune Boosting Meal Plan : Example

- **Breakfast**
Oatmeal with berries, chia seeds, and yogurt
- **Lunch**
Quinoa salad with vegetables, chickpeas, olive oil
- **Snack**
Orange + handful of nuts
- **Dinner**
Salmon with steamed vegetables and brown rice
- **Hydration**
Water, green tea

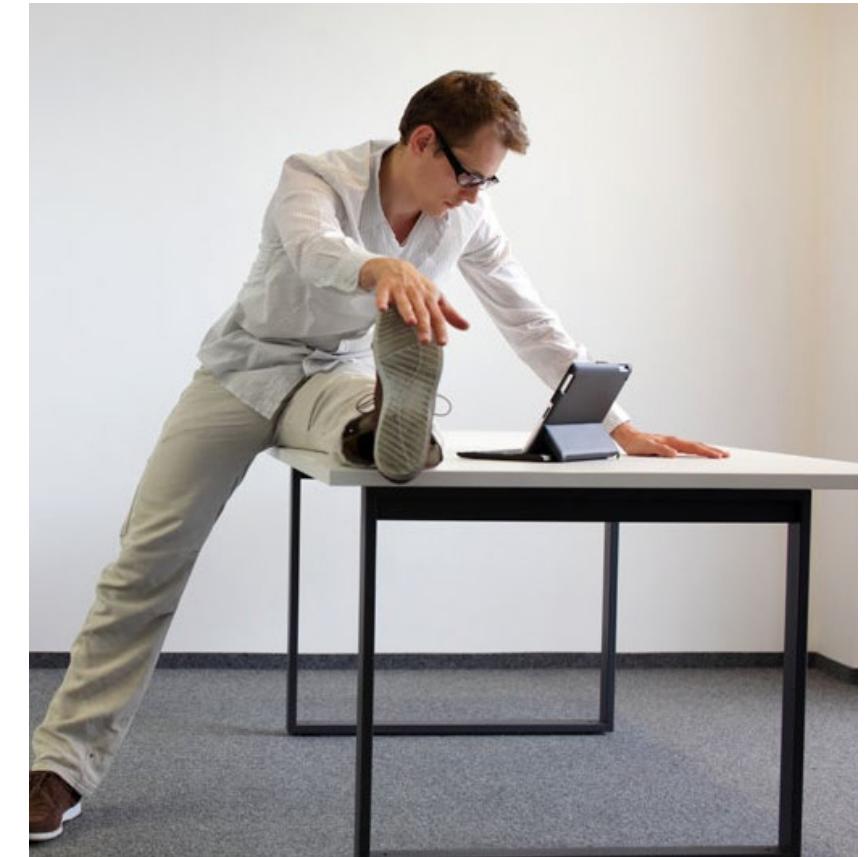


Other Lifestyle Factors To Focus On

- Sleep: 7-9 hours a night; adopt a healthy sleep regimen to help achieve this goal
- Stress management: breathing techniques, yoga, making time for self care
- Physical activity: work towards developing a regimen that you can stay consistent with; get creative with your time!
- Limit alcohol & smoking

Tip: Work in 5-10 minutes of small exercises into your day vs. sitting for long periods. Every minute counts! Try Deskercise for an at work approach to getting in movement!

Try these! <https://time.com/4019563/exercise-work-desk/>



References:

- <https://www.usatoday.com/story/graphics/2024/12/09/how-to-boost-immune-system-winter/76772777007/>
- <https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/healthful-habits/how-to-keep-your-immune-system-healthy>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/about/enhancing-immunity.html>

Thank
you





Let's Cook!

Sweet Potato Nachos from Two Peas and Their Pod

[Loaded Sweet Potato Nachos Recipe](#)