

Eating Well at Home



**EATING TO SUPPORT IMMUNE CAPACITY
AND TO GET BACK TO LIFE DURING COVID-19**

A few tips for eating well:

1

Eat a good protein food at every meal

2

Surround that with as many coloured veggies, nuts, seeds, herbs, fruits and grains as you can for the cell protection they offer.

3

Eat foods in their most original form possible and cut down on processed foods: both support your gut and your immune system.

4

Do all you can to work your muscles and stay active during and as we emerge from COVID restrictions – muscles support immune system & help reduce damaging chronic inflammation as well as move us around.



Give your body what it needs

During these times it is vital you give your body the resources it needs to keep you safe from illness and to keep you well so you can get back to living the life you have anticipated.

Do you need to boost your immune system?

The short answer is 'no'.

Certainly, you need a strong, effective immune system that is able to support you to fight

off infection and illness, but your body can't use more than it needs. Unless you have a diagnosed deficiency, real food will support you much better than the marketers of nutritional supplements might like to suggest.

You don't want to overstimulate immunity because that might drive auto-immune conditions.

Put a wide variety of colours on your plate, and stay as physically active as you can; that gives your body everything it needs.



Eating well for older adults

PROTEIN

As you age, you gradually lose some body muscle. That's partly unavoidable, but reduced activity over the years, periods of immobilisation (bed rest) following accident/illness and from gradually eating less protein containing foods contribute.

COVID 19 restrictions have meant many of us have reduced activity levels. That means working to recover any losses, so they don't contribute to physical and cognitive problems in the years ahead.

Always combine good protein with activity every day. Eating a good protein food at every meal is essential to give your body the resource it needs to avoid muscle loss and help rebuild where possible.

COLOURS

Supplying a variety of foods high in antioxidants gives your body and brain the resources they need to protect your cells from damage and is vital in supporting a strong immune system.

There are hundreds of different antioxidants, all of which are important and all working together for you. Fortunately, they also supply all the differing colours in natural foods so all you need to do is put as many different colours on your plate at every meal surrounding your protein and you have it covered. And the bonus is the fibre many of those also contribute.

GOOD OILS

Your body, brain and your immune system are all supported by Omega 3 fats and other fats found in a range of oily foods and liquid oils. Making sure you get some at most meals each day is important.

Choose from olive oil, oil from nuts and seeds and foods containing good oils – nuts, seeds, avocados, oily fish.



BODYWEIGHT

If you lose weight beyond your 60s without also doing very good exercise, you will always lose some muscle.

Unfortunately, it's not that easy to get it back and over time can have devastating consequences: causing falls, increasing vulnerability to infection and illness, slowing recovery from illness, impacting

your ability to repair wounds and increasing the chance you will end up in hospital.

Aim to stay as active as you possibly can and avoid losing weight from now on. If you do lose some weight, combine eating good protein with whatever activity you can do to regain strength.

Some extra considerations around COVID 19

VITAMIN D

Vitamin D deficiency might increase your chances of getting COVID 19 and, if you do, challenge your ability to recover. Vitamin D deficiency is common if you don't spend a lot of time in the sun.

There are a few food sources — pink fleshed fish such as salmon, mushrooms that have been in sunlight or UV light — but most foods are low so your levels may need checking so deficiency can be treated.

MALNUTRITION WORSENS COVID OUTCOMES

Studies in Europe have shown that malnutrition and frailty worsen outcomes from COVID 19. Make sure you and your loved ones eat well and avoid losing weight during this time.

MUSCLE LOSS IS DAMAGING

Muscle can be lost rapidly with inactivity — do all you can to keep up activity and work your muscles.

Magic Mug Cake

A quick treat recipe with protein and immune support ingredients

YOU'LL NEED:

- a good sized coffee mug
- 1 apple
- 3 tsp olive oil
- 2 -3 tsp good honey or maple syrup
- 1/3 cup each almond meal/wholemeal flour
- berries and extra nuts as desired
- Milk to moisten — about 1/3 cup
- A microwave

METHOD:

- Grease the mug with a little oil.
- Grate the whole apple including skin into the mug — discard just the core centre
- Add the rest of the ingredients apart from milk
- Add enough milk to mix to cake mix consistency
- Microwave 2 minutes (in 1200 watt oven — may need extra in less powerful microwaves).
- Sit a minute or so before eating. Enjoy!



COTA Tasmania thanks dietitian **Ngaire Hobbins** for the valuable information in this publication.

For more information visit www.ngairehobbins.com or look for Ngaire's books at your local bookshop.