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Ashleigh's mission is to help people achieve optimal health and sustainable wellness by sharing the expertise she's accrued over more than 10 years as a dietitian and nutritionist. To find out more visit feedyourfuturedietetics.com



EATING FOR IMMUNITY



Strengthen your immunity this winter with these tips from nutrition expert, **Ashleigh Feltham**.

Winter is often a time when we let our good nutrition slip. All that comfort food is typically easy to access but low on nutrition, so leaves your body feeling sluggish – hence that term ‘the winter blues’.

A better alternative is to eat foods that make you feel energised, as they’ll usually also strengthen your immunity (i.e., your ability to fight off winter germs). So here is a list of foods that are high in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, to help you eat for immunity, for a healthier winter.

The following foods are also high in fibre and protein, which will help you feel fuller for longer and dampen the desire to reach for the hot chips. Also, the foods listed below have a low glycaemic index (GI), meaning they won’t make your blood sugar spike like a high GI food or drink will, giving you a controlled release of energy over the day. These are only three of the benefits you’ll find in the foods listed, but there are many others. Take control during these cooler months, by skipping the fried foods and by creating meals and snacks using these ingredient – doing so, will ensure you do your health and your waistline a favour this winter.

Yoghurt

Low GI, high protein as well as probiotics which help keep your healthy bacteria in your guts stay strong and healthy, promoting an optimal metabolism and immune function.

Ginger

This benefits of this winter herb includes anti-inflammatory anti-microbial and anti-fungal properties, which help fight infections and strengthen your immunity.

Broccoli

Thanks to its vitamin E, C, K, folate and manganese properties this winter veg can help winter cuts or wounds heal, and helps build body tissue, cells and bone.

Spinach / kale

A great source of vitamins and minerals to keep your body strong and healthy.

Fish

Research has linked fish to many health benefits including



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improvements in mood but this meat source is also a great source of protein, omega-3 fatty acids as well as iodine and vitamin D to keep your bones strong, skin healthy and mind sharp.

Citrus fruit

Winter's range of citrus fruit includes grapefruit, lemons, mandarins and kiwifruit. Thanks to their vitamin C content, they can help boost your immunity against pesky winter germs.

Nuts

A fantastic source of healthy fats and protein to keep you feeling fuller for longer.

Wholegrains

Wholegrains are a source of prebiotics, meaning they create the healthy bacteria that keeps your body's immunity strong, and your metabolism functioning



optimally. Whole grains also provide vitamins and minerals that refined grains don't, and they're a great source of fibre and low GI carbohydrate. Great options include couscous, brown rice and pasta, quinoa and corn. Try adding half a cup to your lunch or dinner, and enjoy the richer taste that refined grains often lack.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS

From this list you can create a smorgasbord of meals. Here are some examples to get you started:

Snack ideas

- ▶ 200g low fat yoghurt with half a cup of berries and a small handful of nuts
- ▶ 2-3 wholegrain biscuits topped with tuna (95g in spring water) with a handful of spinach or kale.

Lunch and dinner ideas

- ▶ Half a cup of brown rice and a sauce made from a cup of spinach, tomato and any other vegetables you desire. Serve alongside 100g salmon.
- ▶ Cook sweet potato slices in olive oil, season with herbs and spices of your choice, and then roast. Add a cup of spinach or kale to a small handful of walnuts and half a cup of couscous, and enjoy this deliciously nutritious warm sweet potato salad.
- ▶ Top half a cup of wholegrain pasta with sauce made from tinned tomatoes, basil and oregano, 100g tinned tuna in spring water, olives and a small handful of low fat cheese.

Take home message

Eating well does not need to be difficult or tasteless, so experiment with what works for you and your budget. Looking after your health during these cooler months will allow you to get the most out of your day, to enjoy the cooler seasons (even just a little more), and avoid the unwanted kilos from creeping up on you. 

