



YOUR DEFENSE: THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

We believe that lifestyle matters. Here are tips that can be helpful to the whole family, all aimed at building your immune system.

IMMUNE BUILDING:

One of the very critical issues with COVID-19, and all other diseases for that matter, is building our immune systems. The immune system is a complex network of cells and proteins that defend our bodies against infections and diseases. Amazingly enough, the immune system has an intricate record of every germ it has ever defeated and develops a strategic plan to defeat it if it ever enters the body again. If you build a strong immune system not only do you reduce the risk of getting the virus, but if you do get it, the symptoms will tend to be much less, and the duration of your illness will likely be less.

We cannot guarantee that you will never get a virus like this because obviously there is no guarantee of that. There are certainly ways we can reduce the risk of getting the virus - excellent hand hygiene and social distancing are the ones that everyone is talking about but immune building is just as important.



GET PLENTY OF REST

Sleep is very important - both in prevention and cure of illness. Maintain good, regular sleep habits... 7-8 hours per night.



DRINK LOTS OF WATER

Alcohol and caffeinated drinks should be avoided. Water protects the body from dehydration allowing every cell to function and fight at peak performance. It is a key element to enhancing our immune system. So, drink lots of water! At least eight (8-ounce) glasses a day.



EAT HEALTHFULLY

Nutrition is key in any illness, both as prevention and assisting in the cure. Fruits and vegetables, as well as whole grains, reduce inflammation and improve blood vessel function. Plant foods are loaded with health-promoting, protective phytochemicals that neutralize the oxidative stress of infections and other diseases. Animal products contain inflammatory substances and should be avoided in general and particularly now. Plant foods such as kale and other green leafy vegetables, alongside a rainbow of colors should grace your plate. Wholegrains, nuts and seeds are also a must. Sugar impairs white blood cell function and so simple added sugars should be avoided.



GET ADEQUATE FRESH AIR & EXERCISE

Exercise is also important, and whenever possible, exercise outdoors in the sunshine. Even if it is cloudy or cold, you will still get the benefit of fresh air and exercise. A brisk walk for 30 – 60 minutes per day is ideal.



HOT & COLD 'TREATMENTS'

The exposure to cold is another key to recovery from infectious diseases. We recommend a hot shower for 3-5 minutes, followed by a cold shower for about 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times. Cold stimulates the immune system. It is surprising how quickly our bodies allow us to tolerate quite cold water for 30 seconds.



PLANT-BASED RECIPE IDEAS:

PLANT-BASED LASAGNA (RECIPE FROM CHLOE'S KITCHEN)

Garden Ricotta:

- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 14-ounce pkg extra-firm tofu drained
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 1½ teaspoons sea salt
- 1½ teaspoons black pepper (optional)
- 1 Tablespoon miso paste
- 3 cups fresh basil

Sauce:

- 1 Tablespoon Olive oil
- 8 ounces crimini mushrooms - sliced
- 1 24-ounce jar marinara sauce (you may need more)
- ¼ cup soy, almond or rice milk
- 1 Tablespoon maple syrup
- Sea salt to taste

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- 1 pound no-boil or regular lasagna noodles prepared per package directions
 - 5 ounces baby spinach

Directions: To make garden ricotta: In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat and sauté onions until soft then remove from heat. In the food processor, combine onions, garlic, tofu, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and miso paste. Pulse until mixture is almost smooth. Add basil and pulse till basil is incorporated. To make the sauce: sauté mushrooms until soft and add marinara sauce, nondairy milk, maple syrup, and heat through. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Assemble in a 9 x 13-inch pan by layering some sauce, four noodles on top, a layer of ricotta, a layer of half the spinach. Then another layer of four noodles, sauce and four more noodles, more sauce, remaining garden ricotta, remaining spinach and four more noodles, then sauce. Cover and bake at 375° for 45 minutes. Let rest for 5 minutes and then dig in!!

MINT PESTO (RECIPE FROM LOVE & LEMONS)

- 1 cup fresh mint
- ½ cup pistachios
- 1 cup peas (frozen or fresh)
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove
- Whole grain baguette or artisan bread

Directions: Combine thoroughly in a very good blender or Vitamix. Should be somewhat crunchy. Drizzle the bread with olive oil and toast in oven. Layer the bread with mint pesto, fresh avocado, and fresh watercress and lightly fried sage leaves.

