

BEST FOODS FOR COLD & FLU

Now that temperatures are dropping, our immune systems are collectively becoming more vulnerable to colds and the flu. It won't be long before they make their presence felt around your workplace or your child's school, causing the inevitable worthlessness and misery that comes with being firmly planted on the couch for several days. Fortunately, there is a way you can avoid the worst of the season. By eating right, you'll not only feel better day-to-day, but you'll also strengthen your immune system, lessening your chances of experiencing a bad cold or flu for an extended period of time. Here are the 15 best foods to eat - sick or not - in the coming months

1. **Garlic:** Incorporating garlic into your diet results in a myriad of long-term and short-term health benefits. It contains compounds that fight bacterial, viral, parasitic and fungal infections. Particularly helpful is allicin, which is the main component that blocks unwanted enzymes. The only downside of eating too much garlic is the resulting putrid breath, but it's a small price to pay for strengthening your immune system.
2. **Oregano:** Oregano is known for possessing potent antioxidants that come with its plentiful flavonoids and phenolic acids. Of course, you can cook using the herb along with garlic, for example, to have an immune-boosting meal. Or you can take oil of oregano, which is packed with zinc, magnesium, calcium, iron, copper, potassium, boron and manganese.
3. **Ginger:** Tea, especially ginger tea, has long been a go-to home remedy for fighting colds. The root contains the anti-inflammatory agent shogaol, which has been rigorously studied to gain insight into its remarkable health benefits. Ginger primarily helps soothe headaches and nausea, and it can induce sweat in order to release toxins during the onset of a cold.
4. **Oats:** Oats are chockfull of fibre beta-glucans and vitamins B and E, making them advocates of both your immune system and digestive system. The flu or a tough cold can take a toll on your stomach, so it's important that you take measures to ensure it remains in tip-top shape. Oats can be added in the preparation of meats, or you can simply purchase oatmeal or oat bran.
5. **Mushrooms:** Mushrooms are worthy virus and bacteria fighters because they unleash beta-glucans that stimulate the immune system, searching and destroying disease-causing cells. They make an excellent side dish or ingredient in an existing dish.
6. **Broccoli:** Although you may have dreaded this veggie as a kid, you probably recognise its benefits now that you're an adult. Broccoli promotes a strong immune system by providing glucosinolates, and it's also a great source of vitamins A, C and E.
7. **Cabbage:** Like its equally unpopular aforementioned veggie peer, cabbage is more appreciated with age. It's high in glucosinolates, vitamin C and fibre, and it can be used in a variety of dishes - it's a potential ingredient for a cold-soothing stew, or if you're a big fan of it, cabbage soup is an effective cold remedy.

8. **Carrots:** Carrots do more than just promote eye health. They increase the amount of infection-fighting cells with their production of beta-carotene. While some opt to eat carrots on their own, others choose to add them to a stew or drink them in juice-form.
9. **Sweet Potatoes:** Popular in America at Thanksgiving time, they contain lots of beta-carotene and fibre. They're easy to toss in the oven and eat when you're sick and don't feel like concocting an entire meal.
10. **Oranges:** Oranges and other citrus fruits are rich in vitamin C, which increases the production of white blood cells and inhibits the entry of viruses by increasing interferon levels. A tall glass of OJ may keep the doctor away, as long as you aren't experiencing stomach problems, in which case you'd be better off avoiding the highly acidic drink.
11. **Lemons:** Looking for even more vitamin C? Lemons provide 80 percent of your daily dosage. What's more, they can be consumed in a stomach-friendly manner by diluting the juice with water, accelerating your recovery time.
12. **Elderberries:** Berries are also rich source of vitamin C and thus have always been a part of sick food diets. Particularly, the lesser known elderberry has a reputation for its flu fighting ability because of its large amount of vitamin C and phytochemicals that are antiviral and anti-inflammatory.
13. **Yogurt:** The live bacteria - or probiotics - in yogurt boost the immune system by protecting it against harmful bacteria, making the dairy product an essential addition to a complete anti-cold and flu diet. Toss in some sliced fruit and you'll have a tasty snack that's also filled with vitamins.
14. **Honey:** Honey is another sweet advocate of healthy bacteria. It's also high in antioxidants, so adding it to tea or pouring it over food will do more than just enhance the taste. When you have a sore throat or persistent cough, honey will coat your throat, easing the irritation.
15. **Oysters:** Oysters may not seem like typical sick food, but they contribute to the immune system by adding zinc, which strengthens helper T cells. The result is that cells are more prepared to deal with invaders. If you can't stomach the slimy mollusk, consider eating other seafood, chicken or beef.