

so nutritious

YOUR 'AH-CHOO' ACTION PLAN: NINE SUPERFOODS *to strengthen your immune system.*

FEED YOUR IMMUNITY

When temperatures begin to drop, it's time to think about the three F's of autumn: falling leaves, football games ... and flu season. Proper nutrition can't replace vaccinations, but the right foods can bolster your immune system. Remember: It's much more palatable to "take your medicine" when it's a dark chocolate-dipped strawberry.

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TEA

Best-bet beverage

What's its secret? Both black and green teas contain potent levels of polyphenols, a type of antioxidant that finds and destroys free radicals—but is of the flavonoid variety, which isn't usually found in most fruits and vegetables.

Make it work for you: Swap out your coffee for tea, and some of your water for iced tea. (Just be careful about adding sweeteners, which can add up throughout a day.)

GARLIC

Sulfur superfood

What's its secret? Garlic has been used as a remedy since the days of the ancient Egyptians, and the bulb's selenium and sulfur compounds have been linked to a reduced risk of cancer. On a more basic level, garlic improves antioxidant activity, protecting the body against free radicals.

Make it work for you: Roast bulbs in olive oil, then spread on bruschetta; add minced garlic to soups, sauces or steamed vegetables such as sturdy greens. Or mix with other herbs as a rub on meats to be roasted.

SALMON

Mega omega-3s

What's its secret? Omega-3 fatty acids, which the human body can't produce and can get only through consumption, reduce inflammation, are important for brain memory and performance function, and strengthen cell membranes, which boosts resistance to infection.

Make it work for you: The American Heart Association recommends eating fatty fish twice a week. Grill fillets with a brush of olive oil and freshly ground black pepper for 4 minutes a side and serve as a main course, or flake $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (one serving) atop a salad.

OATS

Full of fiber

What's their secret? A study released in May reveals that soluble fiber may boost the immune system, and a standard $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of rolled oats provides 2 grams. (They're also a good source of some B vitamins and iron.)

Make 'em work for you: If you're not an oatmeal-in-the-a.m. type of person, add oatmeal as an extender to meatloaf, or sprinkle baked oats mixed with honey atop fruit for a yummy dessert.

STRAWBERRIES

Sweet source of C

What's their secret? Citrus fruits might come to mind first when you think about vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant, but serving size for serving size, (1 cup) strawberries rival oranges—and with fewer calories.

Make 'em work for you: Strawberries shine in desserts, even if it's as simple as sliced berries topped with fresh cream or, even healthier, fat-free yogurt. They're also delicious eaten out of hand or added to a salad.

MUSHROOMS

T-cell architects

What's their secret? Most mushrooms are high in B vitamins, riboflavin and niacin, and white button mushrooms in particular are being studied for their ability to trigger the body into producing "T cells," white blood cells that destroy invaders and strengthen immunity.

Make 'em work for you: One cup of mushrooms—about five medium white button—has only 15 calories and is a good source of protein, so slice and add to salads, stir-fries or pizza.

ALMONDS

Go nuts for vitamin E

What's their secret? Almonds and other nuts are high in the antioxidant vitamin E, which helps the body produce cells that destroy germs and cancer cells. A 1-ounce serving of raw or roasted almonds provides nearly 40 percent of the recommended daily allowance.

Make 'em work for you: Choose unsalted almonds for a protein-rich snack. Unsalted almonds contain more nutrients than salted versions. Add slivered almonds to cookies, cobbler toppings or salads. Or try almond butter in place of peanut butter.

CARROTS

The alpha of beta carotene

What's their secret? The provitamin beta carotene is one of the top antioxidant vitamins and can be converted to vitamin A, helping to create infection-fighting cells (including helper T-cells).

Make 'em work for you: A snack-size (4-ounce) portion of raw baby carrots at lunchtime provides 234 percent of vitamin A for only 30 calories. Overcooking can hinder beta carotene's benefits, so for best results serve carrots raw or lightly steamed.

DARK CHOCOLATE

Melting away free radicals

What's its secret? Like tea, dark chocolate contains antioxidant flavonoids. But milk binds to antioxidants in chocolate, so put down that milk chocolate and look for dark chocolate with at least 60 percent cocoa solids.

Make it work for you: Even dark chocolate is, unfortunately, high in fat. For a double dose of antioxidants, dip fresh strawberries in melted dark chocolate: The berry (or other fruit) will help satisfy any craving for sweets that a relatively small portion of dark chocolate can't cover alone.

HONEY-TERIYAKI SALMON

Yield: 4 servings

This recipe from the American Cancer Society (cancer.org) includes two of the foods featured here. To up the antioxidant ante even further, pair with a green salad with slivered almonds, sliced strawberries and mushrooms, dried cherries, lemon olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

$\frac{2}{3}$ c. thick teriyaki sauce
2 Tbsp. honey
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 ($\frac{1}{2}$ -inch) piece fresh ginger, finely chopped
4 (4-oz.) salmon fillets, 1-inch thick

1. **Place** oven rack in upper middle position and preheat oven to 500 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and lightly coat with nonstick cooking spray.
2. **Combine** teriyaki sauce, honey, garlic and ginger in a bowl. Reserve 2 Tbsp.
3. **Place** salmon fillets skin side down on baking sheet and lightly brush or spoon on glaze.
4. **Bake** for 5 minutes. Remove from oven and spread more glaze over tops and sides of fillets; bake for 5 more minutes, until fish is cooked through.
5. **Remove** from oven and brush with reserved glaze.

Find These Foods

For information on farmers markets in Sonoma County, visit igrowsonoma.org/locate. Be sure to call ahead to verify hours of operation.