

Council on Aging – October 2014
What to Eat When You Don't Feel Well

Good nutrition is essential to a strong immune system, which may offer protection from seasonal illness, such as the flu, as well as other health problems including arthritis, allergies, abnormal cell development and cancers.

When you are too tired to cook, or have a chronic illness like Diabetes or are recovering from surgery, try to eliminate sugar, caffeine and processed foods and include easy to prepare healthy items such as:

cottage cheese or plain yogurt with fruit	cheese and crackers
hummus and veggies	Eggs: scrambled or hard boiled
soups and pre-made stews	fresh fruits, and vegetables
salads	herbal teas
Almonds and other nuts	healthy fats that contain Omega 3 fatty acids such as canned salmon

Help protect yourself against infection and boost your immunity by including these nutrients in your eating plan.

Protein is part of the body's defense mechanism. Eat a variety of protein foods, including seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds.

Vitamin A helps regulate the immune system and protects you from infections by keeping skin and tissues in your mouth, stomach, intestines and respiratory system healthy. Get this immune-boosting vitamin from foods such as sweet potatoes, carrots, kale, spinach, red bell peppers, apricots, eggs or foods labeled vitamin-A fortified, such as milk or cereal.

Vitamin C protects you from infection by stimulating the formation of antibodies and boosting immunity. Include more of this healthy vitamin in your diet with citrus fruits like oranges, grapefruit and tangerines, or red bell pepper, papaya, strawberries, tomato juice or foods fortified with vitamin C, such as some cereals.

Vitamin E works as an antioxidant, neutralizes free radicals and may improve immune function. Include vitamin E in your diet with fortified cereals, sunflower seeds, almonds, vegetable oils (such as sunflower or safflower oil), hazelnuts, peanut butter or spinach.

Zinc helps the immune system work properly and may help wounds heal. Zinc can be found in lean meat, poultry, seafood, milk, whole grain products, beans and nuts.