

# CAN FOODS BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM?

## COVID-19

Understandably, people are worried about COVID-19 (the new coronavirus) and want to do anything they can to avoid catching it. This fear has unfortunately allowed misinformation to spread regarding food and immunity.

### CAN WE 'BOOST' THE IMMUNE SYSTEM VIA DIET?



This is actually a misunderstanding of how the immune system works. A healthy immune system likes to be in balance and it is more helpful to talk about how foods can support its 'normal' or 'ideal' functioning. An immune system which is overactive, can actually lead to problems such as allergies or autoimmune conditions.

### SHOULD WE TAKE FOOD SUPPLEMENTS?



Unfortunately, there is no convincing evidence to suggest taking supplements will give us advanced disease-fighting powers - especially in the midst of a pandemic. Luckily for us, food - by nature - is handily packaged with a mixture of different nutrients to support a healthy immune system. Eating a variety of different foods helps the body get everything it needs from our diet.



Many of us are having to stay indoors more than usual due to the new coronavirus. As we normally get vitamin D from the sun, people with little or no sun exposure should consider taking 10 micrograms supplement each day (even in spring/summer months.) Vitamin D can be purchased from supermarkets or pharmacies.

### CAN ANY FOODS PROTECT US FROM COVID-19?



It is strongly recommended to avoid taking foods or supplements advertised as 'immune boosting' or 'COVID-19 protective' in an attempt to protect us from this virus. Examples include eating garlic, or taking herbal remedies.



Although enticing, there is no robust evidence that these methods work. They could also distract us from doing the things which really help to stop the infection spreading - such as thorough hand washing and social distancing.