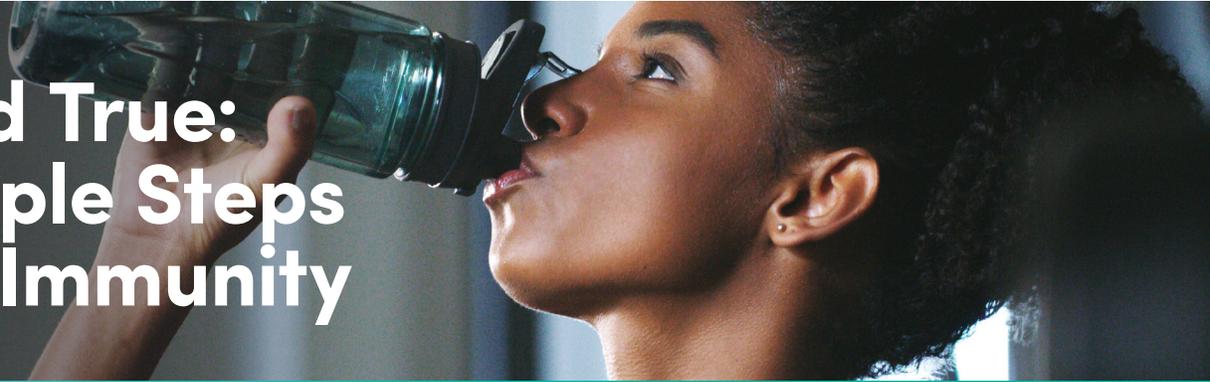


Tried and True: Four Simple Steps to Boost Immunity



Few of us have the time or the computer literacy to sort through the constant flow of health advice we encounter these days. The sheer volume, conflicting opinions and unfamiliar sources can bring more confusion and stress than health and healing.

As a physician, I help patients find clarity and choose personalized care options in the face of information overload. My first step is to offer every patient the same set of guidelines to boost and sustain healthy immune systems.

The four simple practices I suggest may not have the allure of a new treatment or trend, but they are foundational to optimal health and backed by gold standard research. We know that our natural immunity can be supported, if not enhanced greatly, by this common-sense approach.

1 Enough Sleep – At the Right Time

When you don't get enough sleep, you put your immunity at risk. Adequate sleep is required to give the body time to rest, reset and repair. Many important chemicals, inflammatory markers and hormones can be impacted negatively by the lack sleep; many are stabilized and enhanced by an adequate amount of it.

In Ayurvedic medicine, we suggest our patients go to bed around 10 p.m. and wake up by 6:00 a.m. Sunset is the cue to start winding down. Start your bedtime routine, which might include brushing your teeth, taking a hot bath and cleaning up around the house to a little bit of soothing music. Turn off all screens by 9 p.m. so that you're in bed by 10 p.m. and asleep by 10:30 p.m.

2 Move It

Try to get some exercise during the day, even if it's just walking around the block when you get a break. This is all about getting your body moving, so find something you love to do, or need to do, that involves movement. Garden, pull weeds, walk the dog—whatever you choose to do, make it fun and make it consistent.

3 Eat Color and Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate

Most of us know that we should be eating fresh unprocessed foods and as little

sugar as possible. Fruits and vegetables are extremely important and you should be trying to eat the whole color spectrum. The more colorful the fruit or vegetable, the better for you. Hydration is also a priority. If you find water boring, consider soups and broths, as well as herbal teas. Your intake should be constant throughout the day, starting when you wake up in the morning.

4 Stick to It

You'll notice that I mention consistency a lot when talking about food, exercise and sleep. Routine, which is the fourth basic step for strong immunity, is important across the board. Try to stick to a pattern as much as possible, even when times are difficult or disorienting. Make your schedule easy to follow and not too loose or ambitious. Once you establish a routine, you may notice physical symptoms if you stray from it. You might start feeling more fatigued or stressed, and your digestion may be disrupted. These symptoms may disappear as you get back in step.

Be Kind to Yourself

I know these steps can be a challenge, especially when life gets chaotic. Nobody is perfect—just try to aim for doing the best you can. If you can manage 70 to 80 percent compliance, you're doing great. The worst thing for your immunity, after all, would be for you to feel stress and guilt for not supporting your immunity.



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After attending medical school at Western University of Health Sciences (WUHS), Dr. Dandekar completed her medical residency at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles County Medical Center in Los Angeles, California. Dr. Dandekar has been a licensed physician since 2002. Dr. Dandekar is also fluent in Hindi and Marathi.

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