**December 2023 Wellness Article**

**Wellness for the Holidays**

Winter has come! It’s that magical time when seasons change, holidays are here, and get-togethers create an overall sense of excitement. It also can be a time of added stress, missed loved ones, and abandoned self-care routines. Thankfully there are a few things we can do to help avoid getting sick and keep our energy up for the extra activity and interactions.

When I did a search on how to boost immunity the CDC’s first recommendation was to eat well.1 My passion is nutrition so I’m a firm believer in the power that food can have on our overall well-being. And besides the CDC we see time and time again the research that points to good nutrition to help our body fight illness, feel better mentally and positively impact our sleep. 2,3,4

So what does “eat well” mean? Probably what we already know – focus on getting lots of vegetables and fruit, lean protein and whole grains. Also, it means being mindful about how much added sugar and saturated fats we consume.1 “Immune cell function appears to be influenced by certain nutrients that form parts of the cell membrane structure and are involved in energy production and prevention of cytotoxicity. Nutrients also contribute to the initiation and regulation of adaptive immune responses.”5 When we provide our body with a variety of the above-mentioned food items we are providing our body with the vitamins, minerals and other important materials to be well and stay well.

One easy way to boost your nutrition could be adding a new fruit or vegetable every month. Trying out different items helps provide our body with different tools to stay healthy and it keeps us from getting bored of a certain item. You can visit [https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate](https://us-east-2.protection.sophos.com?d=myplate.gov&u=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubXlwbGF0ZS5nb3YvZWF0LWhlYWx0aHkvd2hhdC1pcy1teXBsYXRl&i=NWFiY2ZlODhmMDlmOTgxNmEyYjgxZDlk&t=VWZzdlF6dlVidGtiVldvM2hQb1RGd0RXdEZ5V3VGZ3VkdWRCWDMzN2RhYz0=&h=fc070f52ee264270ab3c3f70b05c69c3&s=AVNPUEhUT0NFTkNSWVBUSVZn2_RCdThIG7rmSWw0cPS5jgcOWji_8mWF99QdamyEow) to see the recommended amounts of fruit, vegetables and other food groups you should be getting by selecting the food group and entering in your specific information. Another easy way is to just divide your plate into 4 sections and have protein in one section, grains (including starchy vegetables) in one section, and then fruit and vegetables to complete the other 2 sections. This is a great way to set up your plate as it also provides built-in portion control.

During the holidays in particular it can be a great way to keep us focused on eating well while we still may enjoy some of those extra goodies. And with an added benefit of helping to boost or improve our immunity why wouldn’t we want to provide our body with abundant nourishment? Winter has come – let’s prepare our bodies to thrive this season!

1. [https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/features/enhance-immunity/index.html](https://us-east-2.protection.sophos.com?d=cdc.gov&u=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuY2RjLmdvdi9uY2NkcGhwL2RucGFvL2ZlYXR1cmVzL2VuaGFuY2UtaW1tdW5pdHkvaW5kZXguaHRtbA==&i=NWFiY2ZlODhmMDlmOTgxNmEyYjgxZDlk&t=WjY4UnMxY0lRS3ZCRmszRkNrcEs2cWJVRjRwdG9LZHJxYm5lY2NHQlRMND0=&h=fc070f52ee264270ab3c3f70b05c69c3&s=AVNPUEhUT0NFTkNSWVBUSVZn2_RCdThIG7rmSWw0cPS5jgcOWji_8mWF99QdamyEow)
2. [Effects of Diet on Sleep: A Narrative Review - PMC (nih.gov)](https://us-east-2.protection.sophos.com?d=nih.gov&u=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubmNiaS5ubG0ubmloLmdvdi9wbWMvYXJ0aWNsZXMvUE1DNzIzMDIyOS8=&i=NWFiY2ZlODhmMDlmOTgxNmEyYjgxZDlk&t=aExMQy8zdVZiaVFTNVpNK3QwSGdmdjVJSGpjWjZMUndpNEJzSGhUMDlxYz0=&h=fc070f52ee264270ab3c3f70b05c69c3&s=AVNPUEhUT0NFTkNSWVBUSVZn2_RCdThIG7rmSWw0cPS5jgcOWji_8mWF99QdamyEow)
3. [The Effects of Dietary Nutrition on Sleep and Sleep Disorders - PubMed (nih.gov)](https://us-east-2.protection.sophos.com?d=nih.gov&u=aHR0cHM6Ly9wdWJtZWQubmNiaS5ubG0ubmloLmdvdi8zMjY4NDgzMy8=&i=NWFiY2ZlODhmMDlmOTgxNmEyYjgxZDlk&t=VDF2MjFxNFhlN2pqRWNNam1zamhYekZObDVDTW5BeHpqYmdaQnpSbFUzdz0=&h=fc070f52ee264270ab3c3f70b05c69c3&s=AVNPUEhUT0NFTkNSWVBUSVZn2_RCdThIG7rmSWw0cPS5jgcOWji_8mWF99QdamyEow)
4. [Benefits of Healthy Eating | Nutrition | DNPAO | CDC](https://us-east-2.protection.sophos.com?d=cdc.gov&u=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuY2RjLmdvdi9udXRyaXRpb24vcmVzb3VyY2VzLXB1YmxpY2F0aW9ucy9iZW5lZml0cy1vZi1oZWFsdGh5LWVhdGluZy5odG1s&i=NWFiY2ZlODhmMDlmOTgxNmEyYjgxZDlk&t=Vi85dXluV0pnNUxxUWk4YVFtc3lYQk00ZnRyUFM5SDJlY1d0R3crWVgvUT0=&h=fc070f52ee264270ab3c3f70b05c69c3&s=AVNPUEhUT0NFTkNSWVBUSVZn2_RCdThIG7rmSWw0cPS5jgcOWji_8mWF99QdamyEow)
5. [The Influence of Nutritional Factors on Immunological Outcomes - PubMed (nih.gov)](https://us-east-2.protection.sophos.com?d=nih.gov&u=aHR0cHM6Ly9wdWJtZWQubmNiaS5ubG0ubmloLmdvdi8zNDEzNTg5NC8=&i=NWFiY2ZlODhmMDlmOTgxNmEyYjgxZDlk&t=bWdsUGNqdWRGT29lcTVJRmxCV1dYN1FlWEhBdzRucnlnenBoWXNqWDlyOD0=&h=fc070f52ee264270ab3c3f70b05c69c3&s=AVNPUEhUT0NFTkNSWVBUSVZn2_RCdThIG7rmSWw0cPS5jgcOWji_8mWF99QdamyEow)

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