

# Advice From Your Pharmacist

**Is Your Body  
Resistance In Tip-Top  
Condition?**



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## The Immune System

The human body is constantly exposed to foreign invaders such as bacteria, and viruses. Many of these invaders are pathogenic or disease causing. However, the human body has a special system that is able to combat different types of infectious microorganisms.

This defence mechanism is known as the immune system, or also commonly known as body resistance. The immune system is collectively made up of a host of specialised white blood cells and antibodies that have the capability of neutralising the infectious invaders.

Sometimes, the immune system may not be working at its optimal capacity. Under such a situation, the body becomes prone to infection. Stress, improper diet, insufficient rest and some types of medication are triggering factors that can compromise the defensive nature of the immune system.

## Maintaining An Effective Immune System

An efficient immune system may be maintained by:

- Ensuring a balanced diet that has plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits.
- Performing regular exercises of moderate intensity and frequency.
- Having ample rest and sleep.

A healthy lifestyle, coupled with moderate use of health supplements has been known to assist in maintaining an active immune system. The following vitamins, minerals and herbs have been indicated to boost body resistance:

- Vitamins A and C
- Zinc and selenium
- Herbs such as Garlic, Echinacea and Ginseng are known to have immuno-modulatory activity that stimulates the proliferation of white blood cells and increase the titre of antibodies.

Health Supplements	Usual Doses	Precautions
Vitamin A	Recommended Daily Allowance for adult: 5000 IU/day	Excessive doses should be avoided during pregnancy and warfarin therapy.
Vitamin C	Recommended Daily Allowance for adult: 60 mg/day	Mega doses should be avoided in those with history of renal stones.
Zinc	15 - 30 mg/day	Excessively high doses can cause toxicity.
Colostrum	15 - 30 mg/day	Avoid in pregnancy and breastfeeding.
Echinacea purpurea	6 - 9 ml/day of the root extract 900 mg/day of the leaf	Do not take for more than 8 consecutive weeks. Should be avoided in pregnancy and breast-feeding.
Garlic (Allium sativum)	4 g/day of freshly minced garlic bulb 600 - 900 mg/day of dried garlic powder	Should be avoided in pregnancy. May increase risk of bleeding during warfarin or aspirin therapy.
Ginseng (Panax ginseng)	100 - 300 mg/day	Exercise care with warfarin and digoxin therapy.

*\*To avoid the use of excessive doses, follow dosing instruction provided by the product or ask your pharmacist.*

## What can the pharmacist do for you?

The pharmacist can

- Advise you on the safe and appropriate use of health supplements based on the status of your health.
- Advise you on the suitability of complementary use of health supplements with your existing drug therapy.
- Help you select the most cost-effective product based on your budget.

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