

20 Vitamins and Supplements To Boost Immune Health for COVID-19

What supplements should I take for Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Picture of vitamin C, a supplement that can help protect against COVID-19.



- The recent [COVID-19](#) coronavirus outbreak causes a variety of telltale signs and symptoms, ranging from [fever](#) and dry [cough](#), to more extreme symptoms requiring immediate medical help such as difficulty [breathing](#) and [confusion](#).
- We do not currently have any [vaccines](#) or antiviral medications that specifically prevent, cure, or treat [COVID-19](#), so treatment will usually involve managing symptoms with supportive treatments.
- If you have relatively mild [COVID-19](#) symptoms and don't have any other medical conditions that would put you at high risk for developing complications of COVID-19 (over the age of 65, [diabetes](#), [COPD](#), [heart disease](#), [kidney disease](#), [HIV](#), [asthma](#), undergoing [cancer](#) treatment), these [vitamins](#) and [supplements](#) might help strengthen your immune system to fight coronavirus.
- It is important to note that no vitamin or supplement can cure COVID-19, nor is there solid evidence any non-FDA-approved vitamin or supplement has any effect on COVID-19. Immune supporting effects of [supplements](#) and [vitamins](#) in the context of the coronavirus is theoretical.
- Vitamins and supplements may interact with one another in your system and with prescription or [over-the-counter](#) medications. Notify your doctor about all the [drugs](#) and supplements you are taking, and do not start a vitamin regimen without consulting your physician.

What vitamins can help prevent COVID-19 and other illnesses?

Because COVID-19 comes with [cold](#) and [flu-like symptoms](#), Vitamins B, C and D, as well as zinc may be helpful in boosting your immune system and fighting the illness in the same way they can help you get over a cold or [flu](#).

- **Vitamin C**
Generally, [vitamin C](#) can help you fight a cold faster or ease your cold symptoms if you were taking it prior to getting sick. As an antioxidant, vitamin C can help reduce inflammation—and lung inflammation is a severe symptom of COVID-19, which can lead to respiratory distress or even death. So if you're still healthy, it doesn't hurt to start taking vitamin C now.
- **Vitamin D**
The primary function of [vitamin D](#) is to help your body maintain optimal blood levels of calcium and phosphorous, which you can get through exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays, or through supplements and the foods you eat.
Getting enough [vitamin D](#) can also protect you from [respiratory infection](#). [Vitamin D](#) supplementation significantly decreases the chance of respiratory tract infections, based on clinical studies published in the *Journal of Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics*.
- **B Complex vitamins**
Vitamin B6 is essential to keeping your immune system in top condition. Be sure to get enough vitamin B as a supplement, as part of your daily [diet](#) (you can easily get your daily intake from fortified cereals) or in a multivitamin.
- **Zinc**
Popping a zinc throat lozenge, or taking an over-the-counter cold remedy with zinc in it (as a syrup or tablet) helps shorten the length of rhinovirus colds. Zinc also helps symptoms—[nasal congestion](#), nasal drainage, [sore throat](#), and [cough](#)—resolve sooner.
Zinc has also been found to help produce and activate T-cells (t-lymphocytes), which trigger the body to respond to infections, according to the NIH.
For a faster recovery, start taking zinc to treat your illness within the first 24 hours of symptoms. A proper dose of zinc is 75 mg, but beware: Taking more than 150mg per day of zinc could cause zinc toxicity and also have a negative impact on your immune system.
If you're taking more than one zinc medication, check with your doctor first to prevent adverse reactions.

What are the best supplements to take during COVID-19 crisis?

Whether eaten as a whole food or in the form of a pill, the following supplements may help keep you healthy and your immune system in top shape to combat coronavirus. Once again, benefits are theoretical.

- **Elderberry**
Full of antiviral and anti-inflammatory properties, elderberry syrup is used as a remedy for colds, flu, and bacterial [sinus infections](#). Elderberry works by reducing swelling in the [mucus](#) membranes.
Some studies suggest elderberry extract reduces the duration of the flu, which is why some believe it may also help your immune system against coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.
- **Mushrooms**
Mushrooms are high in selenium and B vitamins like riboflavin and [niacin](#), which are needed to keep the immune system [running](#) optimally. Mushrooms are also high in polysaccharides, [sugar-like](#) molecules that boost immune function.
- **Astragalus**
Astragalus is an herb, and its root is used in medicine. Typically used to strengthen the immune system and treat the [common cold](#), upper respiratory infections, seasonal [allergies](#), [swine flu](#), astragalus is also used to fight bacteria and [viruses](#).
Its effectiveness against illness doesn't have a lot of research behind it, although in treating seasonal [allergies](#), 160 mg of astragalus root extract (Lectranal by Milsing d.o.o.) by mouth daily for 3-6 weeks was found to improve symptoms such as running nose, [itching](#), and [sneezing](#).
- **Selenium**
Selenium is a mineral with a variety of uses, including preventing [bird flu](#) and swine flu. A potent antioxidant, selenium can boost immune function, except in those with autoimmune disorders, who could experience a negative impact on their immune system.
- **Garlic**
[Garlic](#)'s antiviral properties may be helpful in reducing the severity of symptoms in colds, flu or COVID-19 infections.
In one study, people who took garlic supplements during cold season caught fewer colds than those who took placebo pills. Garlic may also shorten the duration of a cold. While you can eat garlic fresh, you can also take it in the form of a supplement.
- **Andrographis**
A plant used in medicine for a variety of ailments, andrographis is frequently used as a painkiller and [fever reducer](#), and to treat the [common cold](#) and flu.
Taking andrographis extract in combination with Siberian [ginseng](#) (Kan Jang, Swedish Herbal Institute) may improve symptoms of the [common cold](#) when started within 72 hours of feeling sick.
According to another study, patients with flu who took a specific Andrographis extract in combination with Siberian ginseng (Kan Jang, Swedish Herbal Institute) felt better more quickly than patients taking [amantadine](#), a drug approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to prevent Asian flu and treat [influenza A](#). They also experienced fewer complications after the flu: sinus [pain](#), breathing problems and [coughing \(bronchitis\)](#).
- **Licorice root**
[Licorice](#) root, when used as a gargle, may be used to soothe the [pain](#) of a [sore throat](#), a common symptom of coronavirus, according to a 2009 study in the journal *Anesthesia & Analgesia*. Additionally, licorice root can loosen [congestion](#) and reduce inflammation. You can also chew a piece of licorice root or drink it as a tea.
- **Pelargonium sidoides**
Also known as Umckaloabo among other names, pelargonium sidoides is commonly taken by mouth for upper respiratory infections including [bronchitis](#), [sinusitis](#), [sore throat](#), [tonsillitis](#), and the common cold.
Taking a specific extract of pelargonium sidoides seems to help reduce symptoms and clear up the common cold after 10 days of treatment. It also lessens [symptoms of bronchitis](#) in adults within 48 hours of feeling sick.
- **Curcumin**
Curcumin is derived from the Curcuma longa plant, commonly known as turmeric. Curcumin is used in Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine for its analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and antiseptic activity. Curcumin can help fight inflammation and aid the body's immune response, as found by a study published in *Molecules*.

- **Echinacea**
[Echinacea](#) has been used to treat colds symptoms upon first signs of illness, but the research on its effectiveness varies. Some research shows that taking echinacea can reduce the risk of catching a cold by 45% to 58%. But other research shows that taking echinacea does not prevent the common cold when you are exposed to cold viruses.
 Early research shows that taking a specific echinacea product (Monoselect Echinacea, PharmExtracta, Pontenure, Italy) daily for 15 days might improve the response to the [flu vaccine](#) in people with breathing problems such as [bronchitis](#) or [asthma](#), and these are high-risk types who could suffer complications of COVID-19.
 When combined with antibacterial and antiseptic sage as a throat spray, echinacea and sage were found by a 2009 study to ease the pain of a sore throat.
- **Propolis**
 Propolis, a resin-like material from the buds of poplar and cone-bearing trees, is used for boosting the immune system, and as an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Some evidence suggests that propolis might help prevent or reduce the duration of common colds and other [upper respiratory tract infections](#).
- **Acai berry**
 Acai berry is such a potent antioxidant and stimulator of the immune system, researchers are studying it as a potential treatment for all kinds of conditions, and it's often touted as a supporting of general health and immune function.

What alternative medicine supplements can I take to stay healthy from COVID-19?

The Chinese government and state-linked news agencies touted traditional Chinese medicine for symptom relief during the original December 2019 coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China. There is little good evidence that TCM is effective, but it has been correlated with some reduction in symptom duration in some studies.

Based on studies of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) focused on the [prevention](#) of [severe acute respiratory syndrome \(SARS\)](#) and [H1N1](#) influenza, researchers found:

- None of the participants who took TCM contracted [SARS](#) in the 3 SARS studies.
- The infection rate of H1N1 influenza in the CM group was significantly lower than the non-CM group in the H1N1 studies.

The following supplements, as noted in the *Chinese Journal of Integrative Medicine*, are suggested for treating and/or preventing coronavirus symptoms:

- **Radix astragali (Huangqi, or astragalus)**—boosts the immune system and may prevent colds and upper respiratory infections.
- **Radix glycyrrhizae (Gancao, or licorice root)**—relieves sore throat and cough, and may ease symptoms of COVID-19.
- **Radix saposhnikoviae (Fangfeng, or siler root)**—in traditional Chinese medicine, it's commonly used to treat general aches, [headaches](#), [fever](#), cold, and [allergic rhinitis](#).
- **Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae (Baizhu, or Atractylodes)**—in traditional Chinese medicine, it's used to support lung health.
- **Lonicerae Japonicae Flos (Jinyinhua, or honeysuckle)**—decreases inflammation in [upper respiratory tract infections](#) including colds, influenza, swine flu, and [pneumonia](#); other viral and [bacterial infections](#).
- **Fructus forsythia (Lianqiao, or forsythia)**—decreases inflammation of small air passages in the lung ([bronchiolitis](#)), tonsillitis, sore throat, fever, and more.

Both studies, however, warn against using TCM as the standard treatment or prevention protocol for any of these infections.

Before taking any herbal supplements, check with your doctor first if there may be any interactions with other medications you are currently taking.

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References

https://www.medicinenet.com/covid_19_supplements/article.htm