



ARTICLE

## Strengthening your toddler's immune system

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**3 mins read**

During the early stages in a toddler's life, the body's immunity becomes stronger. Getting exposed to bacteria and viruses from birth plays an important role in building up the toddler's immune system to fight future infections. During winters, a toddler usually fights five to eight colds a year. This number may also increase once she starts going to day care or becomes a play schooler.

We tend to be very cautious when it comes to protecting our toddlers from harmful germs in and out of the house, but providing them with the right nutrition is a huge factor in boosting their immunity. If your child falls sick often, it can affect her daily activities. So, you need to make sure that your toddler's body properly repairs itself when she is sleeping.

### **"Getting exposed to bacteria and viruses from birth plays an important role in building up the toddler's immune system to fight future infections"**

#### **Why is nutrition important for immunity?**

The human body's first line of defense includes the skin, the lining of the digestive tract, and mucus that restricts the entry of germs into the body. There are also special cells that have the ability to fight germs by directly attacking them, or by producing antibodies.

Nutrient deficiencies can:

- Expose your child to infections and diseases
- Reduce your child's food intake which in turn can lead to malnutrition
- Deprive your toddler of the power of 'immuno-nutrients' that can fight infections and diseases!

Here are certain vitamins and minerals that play an important role in improving the immune functions in your child's body.

<b>Nutrients important for your toddler's 1st line of defense</b>	<b>Nutrients important for immune cells</b>	<b>Nutrients important for producing antibodies</b>
• Vitamin A, C, E, Zinc	• Vitamin A, C, D, B6, B12, E, Zinc, Selenium, copper, folic acid	• Vitamin A, D, B6, B12, E, Zinc, Selenium, copper, folic acid

#### **And here are some tips to help your toddler consume a healthy amount of these immune-building nutrients.**

- Make sure that your toddler has a healthy diet that consists of a variety of nutritious foods like – fresh fruits and vegetables, necessary fats and oils from fish, tuna, eggs or seeds.
- Vitamin C is a vital nutrient which supports your child's immune system. The foods rich in vitamin C consist of green leafy vegetables, citrus fruits, kiwis, and strawberries.



- Give your child plenty of foods rich in iron, such as red meat, spinach, broccoli, nuts and beans.
- Give her foods rich in Vitamin B6 as it helps in strengthening her immune system. The foods that fall under this category are - whole grain cereals, legumes, green and leafy vegetables, fish and shellfish, meat, nuts, and liver.