

Immunity Boosting through Traditional Medicines

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Introduction

What is Immunity?

Immunity can be defined as the ability of an organism to resist a particular infection or toxin by the action of specific antibodies or sensitized white blood cells OR it can be defined as a condition of being able to resist a particular disease especially through preventing development of a pathogenic microorganism or by counteracting the effects of its products. In human body the immune system is a complex network of cells and proteins that defends the body against infection. The immune system keeps a record of every germ (microbe) it has ever defeated so it can recognise and destroy the microbe quickly if it enters the body again.

Humans have three types of immunity

- ✚ **Innate immunity:** Everyone is born with innate (or natural) immunity, a type of general protection. For example, the skin acts as a barrier to block germs from entering the body and the immune system recognizes when certain invaders are foreign and could be dangerous.
- ✚ **Adaptive immunity:** Adaptive (or active) immunity develops throughout our lives. We develop adaptive immunity when we're exposed to diseases or when we're immunized against them with vaccines.
- ✚ **Passive immunity:** Passive immunity is "borrowed" from another source and it lasts for a short time. For example, antibodies in a mother's breast milk give a baby temporary immunity to diseases the mother has been exposed to.

What are immunity boosters?

Immunity boosters are specifically designed to enhance immunity and can replenish all the necessary nutrients required by the body.

Traditional Medicine

Traditional medicine refers to health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises, applied singularly or in combination to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being.







Role of Traditional Medicine in Immunity Boosting





According to the concept of Immunity in Traditional Medicine- Vyadhikshamatva or Bala or Ojas, the body's resistance is not only important for disease prevention but also for speedy recovery from illness. According to Ayurveda, our body can withstand infections only when all the seven layers of our body's tissues (*Rasa, Mamsa, Rakta, Medha, Majja, Asthi* and *Shukra*) are strong. When the seven layers are working together, our immunity will be boosted. In traditional medicine body's proper functioning is based upon balance of tridoshas such as vatta, pitta and kapha; so balance of tridoshas in body is very necessary for immunity and for immunity boosting in one's body.




Ojas is a subtle and invisible essence of body tissues that keeps us healthy. Ayurveda has said that certain plants and plant products can build ojas to empower our immunity. Medicinal plants and herbs helps in cleanse toxins and in-turn help boost our immunity.

There are several medicinal plants that act as immunity boosters tabulated as below:

Sr. No	Medicinal Plants	Part used	Role	Picture

1.	Ashwagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i>)	leaves, roots, bark, fruit, and seeds but most commonly root	<p>-Traditionally it has been prescribed to strengthen immunity post an illness.</p> <p>-Act as strong anti-inflammatory in conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, autoimmune diseases, skin diseases.</p> <p>-It helps with anxiety and depression.</p>	
2.	Mulethi (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>)	Rhizomes and roots	<p>-The root is powdered and had with honey and ghee to improve immunity.</p> <p>-Used as a home remedy for a number of disorders like cough and cold, natural revitaliser and anti-ageing agent</p>	
3.	Amla (<i>Emblica officinalis</i>)	fruit, seed, leaves, root, bark and flowers	<p>-It is one of the richest sources of vitamin C and is perfect for the overall immunity, as it can rejuvenate and revitalise the body systems.</p> <p>-Amla is cooling in nature and can help remove excess body heat, thus often recommended in pitta conditions.</p> <p>-Chyawanprash also has amla which help to reduce mental and physical fatigue and to boost immunity.</p>	
4.	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinalis</i>)	rhizome	<p>-Ginger is hot in potency and thus aids in decreasing the aggravated vatta and kapha doshas.</p> <p>-Dry ginger powder mixed with sesame oil is used to relieve joint or muscle pains.</p> <p>-It has anti-microbial compounds in ginger helps fight infections and boost immunity levels.</p>	

5.	Tulsi (<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>)	Whole plant	<p>-It is used for respiratory tract infections like cough, cold, sore throat, asthma etc.</p> <p>-Fresh tulsi juice taken twice a day may help to boost health. Adding a few drops of ginger and honey to tulsi juice may help further improve immunity.</p>	
6.	Neem (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>)	bark, leaves, and seeds	<p>-It has been widely used as an immunity booster, due to its anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties it is very effective in keeping the body safe from attacks by harmful pathogens.</p> <p>-It purifies the blood by flushing away toxins and this can strengthen immunity.</p>	
7.	Moringa (<i>Moringa oleifera</i>)	leaves, bark, fruit, seeds, root and flowers	<p>-It contains 7 times more Vitamin C than oranges, which is the chief nutrient to build strong immunity.</p> <p>-It also contains some other vital nutrients that strengthen cells, muscles, tissues and help body to heal.</p> <p>-it also contain potassium, iron, calcium and amino acids.</p>	
8.	Triphala	haritaki, bibhitaki and amla	<p>-Triphala contains the antioxidative properties of three fruits- haritaki, bibhitaki and amla.</p> <p>-It is loaded with Vitamin C and Vitamin A- both of which strengthen your immunity.</p>	

9	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)	Bulb	<p>-It contains allicin- a plant compound that acts as a germicide.</p> <p>-Just like ginger, garlic too will protect us from corona virus by stimulating immunity; consume it raw or partially cooked for more effectiveness.</p>	
10.	Turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)	rhizome	<p>-Turmeric contains curcumin, a phytochemical that can remove toxins from body and strengthen immune system to fight off germs and bacteria.</p> <p>-It is also used to treat <u>pain</u> in the body, <u>ringworm</u>, bruising, leech bites and eye infections etc.</p>	
11.	Black cumin (<i>Nigella sativa</i>)	Seeds	<p>-Black cumin extracts can keep us safe from a range of viruses and bacteria that attack your immune system.</p> <p>-Both black cumin seeds and oil act as antioxidants and help flush out free radicals that weaken immunity.</p>	
12.	Giloy (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>)	Leaves and roots	<p>-Giloy flushes out the AMA toxins from the body and shields the body from various microbial diseases.</p> <p>- It helps clear mucus and catarrh deposits from the nasal cavities and provides relief from chest congestion.</p>	