



مستشفى الملك فيصل التخصصي ومركز الأبحاث
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For Better Health Series (5) Your Food, Health and Immune System

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I have mentioned in a previous article (1) that there is no specific ingredient or food that alone can improve the body's immunity. The immune system is very complex and is linked to the overall health and balance of the body. Healthy and balanced nutrition plays a positive role in supporting the body's immunity.

To understand the importance of nutrition, for example, the elderly are more vulnerable to infectious diseases, some attribute this to the lack of micronutrients and minerals, which include mineral elements such as zinc and multiple vitamins in the feeding of the elderly, either due to a lack of nutrition or due to a chronic disease. Despite the availability of these elements and vitamins in the diet and natural food, their lack in these leads to a lack of these elements and their effect on the body's immunity.

Foods that are important for the body's balance and immunity:

A balanced and healthy diet suitable for each condition is the basis of good health, and this relates to the presence of any diseases that require a specific diet. It is important for the diabetic patient to follow the appropriate diet as well as the chronic kidney patient and the heart patient. Other than that, healthy food is generally a necessity for all of us, and there are many suitable diets, perhaps the best of which is the so-called Mediterranean Diet, which depends on the fundamentals, which consists large amount of vegetables of all kinds, olive oil and unsalted nuts such as walnuts in a moderate amount, whole grains, and low-fat meat in a moderate amount with fish once or more per week if possible. However, there are foods that may help in one way or another in the health of the body and its immune system because it contains an abundance of antioxidants or rare elements and essential vitamins. We mention here without limitation:

- Miscellaneous vegetables: more than the vegetables available in different colors and types, green or red, such as capsicum.
- Medium fruits: especially citrus fruits, berries, kiwi and pomegranate, are rich in vitamin C and antioxidants.
- Fresh milk.
- Nuts like almonds, nuts, or sunflower seeds are not salted in a limited amount.

When to take nutritional supplements

- Except for cases of undernutrition and chronic debilitating diseases of the body, nutritional supplements are not necessary.
- As for taking vitamins and minerals in the form of a pill per day, for example, it is indicated in the elderly or chronic diseases when it is thought that the food does not have a sufficient amount of it. As for vitamin D, it is poor in food, so there is no objection to taking it daily in an amount not exceeding 1000 IU if a person is not exposed to the sun half an hour a day.
- As for herbal compounds, it has not been scientifically proven to affect immunity.

