



Zinc-packed oysters: the most glamorous way to stay healthy

Eat It, *Flu Season!*

Stop wasting precious sick days on, you know, actual illnesses. Nurse—no, nosh—yourself back to health with our edible remedies.

By Rachel Meltzer Warren, R.D.N.

Whether there's a flu outbreak or *Walking Dead* apocalypse, here's a hint: Raid the grocery store first. Downing antibiotics to fight a virus does diddly, yet amazing wellness aids line the shelves of the supermarket. "We know which nutrients support immunity, so we should base our diets on foods that contain them," says Elson M. Haas, M.D., coauthor of *Ultimate Immunity*.^{*} Next time you feel like a zombie—or the mere thought of another hack attack scares the crap out of you—scarf down these germ slayers and stay safe.

“I SIMPLY CAN’T GET SICK!”

Tay-Tay has Karlie, Gigi, and Selena. Your immune system’s long-term #squad? These guys.

Oysters

A zinc deficiency can make immune cells less responsive, according to a 2015 study in *Molecular Nutrition & Food Research*. A good way to make sure you get enough: Eat one of these mollusks cooked or slurp two raw. Either will take care of your recommended daily value. Not a fan? Make a heaping half-cup of wheat germ your a.m. meal.

Papaya

This tropical wonder stimulates antibodies and fights infection (thanks, vitamin A). Plus, in a study on animals, researchers found that it may boost the T-cells that control inflammation.

Shiitake Mushrooms

Eating a single serving of these ‘shrooms daily can reduce your levels of inflammatory proteins and enhance gamma delta T-cell function, both markers of improved immunity, shows a study from the University of Florida.

Edamame

At the sushi bar or the grocery, these little pods deliver a hefty dose of omega-3 fatty acids, which can reduce inflammation and are helpful in preventing diseases such as Alzheimer’s and depression.

Garlic

Okay, fine—it may wreck your breath, but it’ll do the same to germs. Data published in *Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology* indicates that the stinky stuff’s key compound (*allium sativum*) has beaucoup antiviral and antibacterial properties.

Brazil Nuts

Meet the new all-stars of the mixed-nut canister. They’re the top food source of selenium, a potent antioxidant that is needed for nearly all aspects of the immune system to function, per the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. One (nut) and done: That’s all you need for the whole day.



“Bah—it’s too late!”

Mainlining vitamin C packets once ill? The data is disappointingly meh (or, scientifically speaking, inconclusive). But research is strong on these whole-food fixes for pesky cold and flu symptoms.



INSOMNIA

Staring at the ceiling is miserable enough when

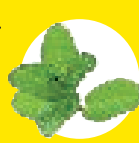
you’re 100 percent—never mind when it feels as if a marching band is parading around your sinuses. Sip on some **tart Montmorency cherry juice** to help you doze; it’s been found to up levels of sleep-promoting melatonin.



COUGH

All that hacking might loosen up gunk in your chest, but

it can make a scratchy sore throat feel even worse. Researchers suspect **honey** may ease those symptoms by suppressing the nerve fibers that cause coughing. Spread it onto toast to quiet the barking and irritation.



CONGESTION

Keep some fresh **peppermint** handy and chew on it if your nose

or chest is feeling blocked—the menthol helps dislodge mucus and phlegm, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center. (Bonus: It can also help soothe crampy stomach muscles if you’re nauseous.)



ACHES AND SHIVERS

Long a go-to in both Eastern and Western

medicine for easing cold symptoms, **licorice** is backed by new evidence that supports its antiviral properties. Add a few drops of extract to hot water or keep a warming and effective root-based tea handy. ■