

# CANYON RANCH.

## 8 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM FROM CANYON RANCH CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

**May 2018** – What makes for “strong immunity” can be confusing. The immune system is the body’s natural defense against threats to overall health, so you may believe that it best serves you by always being active and in fighting mode. But a *strong* immune system is actually one that remains calm and unagitated until it is called to action—and you help yours stay that way.

“Inflammation is an active immune system’s response to some stressor, like an infection, injury, allergy or emotional crisis,” explains Mark Liponis, M.D., Chief Medical Officer of Canyon Ranch.

When the body needs protection from illness, your immune system reacts to keep you from getting sick and sets you on the road to being well again. However, this positive force can also bring its own set of dangers.

“Inflammation can arise for a number of reasons, not just illness. And whenever it is present, your immune system is busy and you have fewer resources available to fight off a real threat,” says Dr. Liponis.

Do what you can to keep your immune system ready, willing and able by helping it stay quiet when its efforts truly aren’t needed and keeping inflammation in check:



### 1. REST AND RESTORE

Insomnia, sleep apnea and a chronic lack of sleep can reduce your T-cell count and increase inflammatory cytokines, both of which make you more susceptible to illness.

Try setting and maintaining a regular sleep schedule, and keep your bedroom dark and free of distractions. If you snore, wake up feeling tired or suspect you may suffer from a sleep disorder, talk to your doctor.



### 2. CHOOSE CALMING FOODS

Fruits and vegetables (aim for a broad rainbow of colors to get the most antioxidant variety), fish and fish oil, olive oil, ground flaxseeds, and spices like ginger, rosemary, basil and turmeric can all have a quieting effect on an overactive immune system.

Look for new opportunities to fit these options into your diet. Add fresh basil to a sandwich, or drizzle olive oil on veggies, for example. Increasing your intake of dietary fiber from foods like berries, beans, and whole grains can also help.



### 3. TURN ON WORKOUT TUNES

Music and dance are especially beneficial components of an exercise routine, according to Dr. Liponis. Scientists have discovered that exercising to rhythmic sounds boosts antibody levels while reducing stress hormone levels, which can weaken the immune system.



### 4. TAKE CARE OF YOUR SMILE

Brush and floss every morning and night, and make regular appointments with a dentist for a check-up. Persistent infections in the gums or teeth increase the body's inflammation levels, leading to not only decreased immunity, but also a higher risk of heart disease and stroke.



### 5. PRACTICE RELAXATION

Deep and relaxed breathing can pacify your immune system and decrease inflammation by reducing the levels of stress hormones in your body, so consider making focused breathing exercises, meditation, yoga or tai chi part of each day.



### 6. EAT SEVERAL SMALL MEALS

Your body knows that every bite of food could introduce potential toxins, so the immune system kicks in as you digest. Bigger meals mean more time spent on high alert, so try several mini ones throughout the day instead of three larger ones.



### 7. FORM EMOTIONAL BONDS

When we feel close to a person or a pet, the amount of time we spend being anxious, angry or depressed—all emotions that tax the immune system, thanks to a surge in the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline—is drastically diminished. A strong connection to a place, hobby or a spiritual practice can have similar effects.



## **8. MAINTAIN A TRANQUIL, CLEAN HOME**

Continue efforts to keep stress to a minimum by creating a pleasing home environment. Try incorporating fresh flowers or indoor plants, natural or quality lighting, music or other pleasing sounds from wind chimes or water features and any items or artwork that make you feel happy and calm.

It is also important that you work to minimize indoor pollutants like pet dander, harsh cleaning chemicals, and mold. When you breathe them in, they settle in the respiratory tract, which can trigger the immune system to respond.

### **About Canyon Ranch®**

Canyon Ranch® has been a pioneer and an industry-leading proponent of the wellness lifestyle for nearly 40 years, operating the world's most celebrated collection of life-enhancement properties. Canyon Ranch has wellness destinations in Tucson, Arizona and Lenox, Massachusetts. In addition, Canyon Ranch operates Canyon Ranch spa + fitness at The Venetian® & The Palazzo® hotels in Las Vegas and Canyon Ranch spa + fitness onboard Cunard Cruise Line®, Oceania Cruises® and Regent Seven Seas Cruises® and on Celebrity Cruises®. Canyon Ranch is a 13-time winner of Travel + Leisure's Best Spa Award, an 11- time recipient of the Condé Nast Traveler Best Destination Spa Award and is recognized as the 'Best Wellness Program' by Virtuoso's 'Best of the Best' 2017 awards.

###