

# Use the Ancient Wisdom of Ayurveda to Boost Your Immunity

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Ayurveda or ayurvedic medicine is a healthy-lifestyle system that people in India have used for more than 5,000 years. The Sanskrit term Ayurveda translates to 'knowledge of life', and its principals of ancient wisdom lay emphasis on total wellness, and works to harmonise our internal and external worlds. In today's day, the COVID-19 pandemic poses one of the most alarming threats to our health and well-being in recent times. With a growing number of cases and no vaccine yet, practising social-distancing, following protective behaviours (such as wearing masks) and boosting our immunity is all we can do to protect ourselves from this alarming virus. To find out how we can use the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda to boost our immunity, Cosmo India spoke to Ayurvedacharya Dr Partap Chauhan, Director, Jiva Ayurveda. From the right foods to consume (and how) and the Ayurvedic practices to include in your daily regimen, here's how you can use Ayurveda to improve your immunity and lead a healthier lifestyle.

**What traditional Ayurvedic, immunity-boosting foods can be beneficially included in our daily diet.**

**Amla:** A well-known fruit across the country and in Ayurveda, it pacifies all three *doshas* especially *pitta dosha*. Amla assists in digestion, metabolism, and elimination of toxic substances. It is considered a good tonic for the heart, lungs and liver. It provides important nourishment required for hair, eyes, and skin health too. Amla is highly praised for its *rasayan guna* and works as natural anti-oxidant. It maintains youthfulness, energy, strength and tonifies body tissues and all organs. Amla promotes *ojas* that is known to enhance resistance power or immunity level of the body.



**Milk :** According to Ayurveda, cow's milk supplies specific and unique nutrition to all, right from an infant to the aged. It is difficult to compare its qualities with any other food item. It provides proper nutrition to the bodies tissues and enhances a person's wellbeing at the physical and psychological level. It is described as one of the prime foods that increase immunity or *ojas*. In Ayurvedic texts, out of many qualities, milk is entitled as '*Jivaniya*' which means that which gives life.

**Turmeric:** A time-tested ancient ingredient, this golden-yellow magical powder has captured the attention of many scientists and research workers. In Ayurveda, it is known to balance all three *doshas*, but if used in high quantity it can increase heat or *pitta dosha*. It is widely used in various ailments related to *rasa* and *rakta dhatus*. Turmeric removes *ama*, a toxic by-product of weak digestion by igniting *jatharagni* or digestive fire. It has many benefits and special functions like being an anti-oxidant, anti-viral, antibacterial, anti-fungal, anti-carcinogenic, and anti-inflammatory.



**Ginger:** This popular ingredient is widely consumed in the form of a spice and for therapeutic purposes. In Ayurveda, it is explained as *rasayan* or rejuvenating with a dominance of pungent taste. Ginger is known for its appetizing, digestive, carminative, anti-inflammatory, analgesic properties. It promotes metabolism and helps in better absorption of nutrients at the cellular level. Ginger helps in cleansing toxins at microcirculatory channels. Ginger plays an important and effective role in creating *ojas*, which is the finest and purest extract of well-digested food.

**Raisins:** In Ayurveda, raisins (*draksha*) are considered an ingredient that has a cooling effect on our system. It balances *vata* and *pitta-dosha* related problems. It helps in the proper functioning of our key organs like heart, brain, lungs, bowel, uterus, etc. *Draksha* naturally assists in the elimination of waste material and provides nourishment to body tissues. *Draksha* also has aphrodisiac properties, known for regaining strength and useful in muscle weakness. It promotes digestive functions as well.

### **Are any of these especially beneficial to fight COVID?**

All the above-mentioned foods are beneficial in maintaining or boosting immunity, and this is essential to fight against any kind of disease caused by microbes, irrespective of their origin (i.e. virus, bacteria, germs, fungus, or any other diseases). COVID, as explained by medical experts, mainly affects the functioning of the respiratory system in the initial stage and later produces various complications. Hence, to fight against such conditions, it is very important to be on your guard and to have a high level of resistance and a strong immune system.

### **How should these immunity-boosting foods be consumed?**

These foods can be consumed in different ways, as per your convenience. Amla can be consumed in the form of a juice, chutney, jam, candy, *murabba*, or *chyanprash*. In the case of milk, it is better to consume it after boiling it once. One can add a pinch of

cardamom or cinnamon powder while boiling milk, especially if they find it difficult to digest. Turmeric can be consumed by adding it to condiments in chutney or pickle form, in cooking, or with milk. Ginger can be added as a part of cooking, tea, decoction, chutney, jam or mixed with milk. Raisins can be eaten directly, or you can soak them overnight and eat them on an empty stomach in the morning. You can also have them with milk or add them in chutneys.

### **Are there any daily Ayurvedic practices we can include in our daily regimen?**

Yes, there are many wonderful, natural, and healthy tips mentioned in Ayurveda to practice as part of your daily routine. A Few of them are waking up early in the morning (prior to sunrise), wash your face and eyes and brush your teeth with herbal formulation, drink lukewarm water before passing stool, gently massage your body, exercise, yoga and pranayam, oil-pulling, applying oil in your nostrils and ears, a daily bath, meditation, proper timely meals, having an early dinner, and sleeping early at night.

### **Ghee is now being considered a superfood, can you tell us the benefits.**

**ghee**

Ghee has been considered a *rasayana* for centuries—a healing food that balances the mind and the body. Ghee is *tridoshic* in small doses and is also a *yogavahi*, which means that it carries the medicinal properties of herbs to the seven *dhatu*s (tissues) of the body. Traditionally, ghee has also been used to improve intelligence, memory, and bolster the immune system. It pacifies the *pitta* and *vata*, and is beneficial, in small amounts, for the *kapha*. It promotes flexibility by lubricating the connective tissues of the body.

### **Ass an additional benefit, can Ghee help with weight-loss?**

People who already have a high cholesterol level or suffer from obesity should be especially cautious when using ghee. It is not to be used when there is high *ama*, or toxins, in the body. You only need a certain amount of fat in your diet, so if you use ghee, make sure to reduce your total fat intake proportionately.