

# The best foods to eat when you have a cold

Orange juice and chicken noodle soup are classic remedies for the common cold. However, they're not your only options.

Other foods, supplements, and fluids can help you find relief and get back on your feet.

## What to eat when you have a cold

"At the first signs of a cold, you want to focus your diet around nutrients that will boost your immune system," says [Fred Pescatore, MD](#), a physician who specializes in natural medicine. "Vitamins and minerals like vitamin C, zinc, magnesium, and calcium are key."

Vitamin C and zinc have been go-to cold treatments for decades. Both of these nutrients won't prevent you from getting sick, but they [may alleviate your symptoms](#).

The [recommended amount of Vitamin C per day](#) for the average adult is between 75 mg for women and 90 mg for men. Therefore, focus on foods like:

- Red bell peppers: One medium-sized bell pepper contains about [190%](#) of your daily vitamin C needs.
- Oranges: One medium orange contains about [130%](#) of your daily vitamin C needs.
- Strawberries: 8 medium strawberries pack about [160%](#) of your daily vitamin C needs.
- Broccoli: One medium stalk covers about [220%](#) of your daily vitamin C needs.
- Kiwi fruit: Two medium fruits contain about [240%](#) of your daily vitamin C needs.

Likewise, the [recommended amount of zinc per day](#) for the average adult is between 8 mg for women and 11 mg for men. Foods high in zinc include:

- Cooked oysters: Three ounces contain about [493%](#) of your daily zinc needs.
- Broiled beef patty: Three ounces contains about [35%](#) of your daily zinc needs.
- Baked beans: Half a cup contains about [19%](#) of your daily zinc needs.
- Dry roasted cashews: One ounce contains [11%](#) of your daily zinc needs.

Though more research is needed, some studies suggest that a lack of magnesium can lead to a weakened immune system.

The [recommended amount of magnesium per day](#) for the average adult is between 310 for women and 420 mg for men. Magnesium-rich foods include:

- Dry roasted almonds: One ounce contains about [20%](#) of your daily magnesium needs.
- Boiled spinach: Half a cup contains about [20%](#) of your daily magnesium needs.

- Cooked black beans: Half a cup contains about [15%](#) of your daily magnesium needs.
- Smooth peanut butter: Two tablespoons contain about [13%](#) of your daily magnesium needs.
- Cubed avocado: One cup contains about [12%](#) of your daily magnesium needs.

## Some tried-and-true supplements may help you recover even faster

When you're sick, you [may lose your appetite](#), which makes it harder to get the nutrition you need to recover. In that case, supplements can be a potent source of vitamins and minerals.

"A normal healthy diet should include enough of these vitamins and minerals, but if needed, you can also supplement these vitamins to ensure you are getting the correct levels," explains Pescatore. "One of the tried-and-true nutrients to ensure a speedy recovery from the common cold is vitamin C."

Other common cold supplements include [elderberry](#), [ginseng](#), and [garlic](#), which may lessen the severity of symptoms and decrease the duration of your sickness.

## What to drink when you have a cold

In addition to eating right, drinking enough is also important. A [cold can dehydrate you](#), so drink plenty of water and avoid liquids that can further dehydrate you.

"Hydration is especially important to help your body fight off any infection or virus. Liquids like broths and [caffeine-free] teas are your best options," says Pescatore "Steer clear of sugary drinks like Gatorade and soda — sugar is known to suppress the immune system, making it tougher to recover from a cold. Other beverages such as coffee, alcohol and fruit juices can dehydrate you as well."