

How to stay healthy in the time of COVID-19 - Greenpeace Philippines

by Greenpeace Philippines



Keeping ourselves and our family healthy is important especially in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Philippines, the number of people infected with the virus is going up each day. With the country now declared in a State of Calamity and a Luzon-wide “enhanced community quarantine” in effect, we need to level up our own defenses as well. Below are some of the things we can do to remain healthy:

Minimize physical contact and exposure

Unless we are front liners like healthcare workers, uniformed personnel or media, we should stay inside our homes. When absolutely necessary to venture out, such as when we need to buy our basic necessities, wear a mask and follow social distancing guidelines. When returning home, washing our hands for 20 seconds, especially after touching surfaces, and [keeping our adorable homes clean](#) is our first line of defense.

Boost your immune system

The second layer of our defense is our immune system. According to Dr. Ronaldo Balburias, who focuses on Functional Medicine (while traditional medicine manages diseases, Functional Medicine focuses on managing health) we can boost our immune system by eating **different colors of fruits and vegetables**. Depending on the color, we can get vitamins that our body needs such as Vitamin A, B12, B9, Vitamin C, D, as well as zinc and minerals to enhance our immune system.



Dr. Rolando Balburias, Functional Medicine and Health Optimization Medicine Practitioner, joins the celebration of the World Meat Free Week in Quezon City. © Greenpeace

Dr. Balburias reminded everyone, “kumain ng gulay na may kulay at tunay.”

Fruits and vegetables rich in **Vitamin A** include sweet potatoes, kalabasa, broccoli, carrots, kale, letsugas & pechay; we can get **Vitamin D**, also known as ‘vitamin for life’, **from sunbathing under** the early morning sun, between 8-10 AM, and can be found when we eat mushrooms and fish. **Red** fruits & veggies are good as anti-inflammatory food; **orange** veggies and fruits are anti-bacterial; **green** ones are good for blood vessels, like controlling high blood pressure; and **purple** ones are good not just for your immune system but also to optimize your brain health.

According to Dr. Balburias, we must also restore our gut health because 70% of our immune system is found in the gut. To do that he said that we should eat lots of fiber from fruits and vegetables! He said we must avoid eating processed food, since these are riddled with chemicals and preservatives, to avoid our gut health being compromised.

Remember, food is medicine. We need to supply our body with what it needs to build our defenses against viruses and bacteria.

So the next time you run to the market, make sure to grab different colors of fruits and vegetables! But do not go on panic buying. Buy only what you need, especially fruits and vegetables!

What else can we do to boost our immune system?

Hydrate.

Drink lots of water to avoid dehydration. Maybe you can infuse your water with some fruits, too?

Get enough sleep.

While we're on lockdown, why don't we reward ourselves with a good zzz? This will not only give us the well deserved rest we need but sleep also helps us boost our immune system. With enough sleep, we can reduce our chances of getting sick. An average of seven or eight hours of sleep is the recommended time for most of us.

Get moving.

While on home quarantine with our family, why not organize a Zumba exercise or yoga? It's fun and this has health benefits as well.

Keep calm and stay positive.

While there are a lot of things to worry about in our situation, stressing on these may actually worsen things. Stress is a factor that can lower our immune system. So let go of things beyond your influence and try to see things in a different perspective. Look at our frontliners and healthcare workers who, despite the risks, are still out there. Go online and see how *bayanihan* can be found everywhere. These are positive examples that tell us that the way to get through this is by **supporting and helping each other**.