

## IMMUNITY LESSON 16

# Eating Better Will Calm Your Brain and Boost Your Immune System



**W**E ARE ALL STRESSED. This unexpected crisis has disrupted our routines and our lives, and we have a fear of the unknown. Some of us more than others. How can we **limit the stress**, so we **feel better** and prevent the immune-depleting stress hormones from weakening our ability to **stay healthy**?

**SIMPLE ANSWER:** We need to do everything we can to engage our parasympathetic (calming) nervous system. We have done that with Better Sleep, Better Attitude, and Better Movement. **Now it is time to engage our parasympathetic system with our fork.**

### HRV

**Heart rate variability (HRV)** is the measurement of the differences in time between heartbeats. **The more variable the time differences (increased HRV), the better.** It reflects a parasympathetic activation which is your “relax and recover” response.

Increasing HRV also diminishes sympathetic dominance, which is your “fight or flight” response. Sympathetic dominance is a major problem in our stressed-out world.

**Simply, HRV is a measure of how relaxed (or stressed) the body is at that time.**

Science has shown that increased HRV levels produce more optimal immune system response and glucose sensitivity.

Often, increased HRV levels have a positive effect on longevity. And, it **calms your brain. Which is our goal.**

Additionally, healthy HRV levels help you get more restful sleep, something we know is vital to combatting stress, boosting our immune system, and just feeling our best.

We need to do all we can to improve our HRV. Sleeping, moving, and being optimistic helps a ton. Eating clean, non-processed foods is also one of the most effective ways to do this.

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## Eating Habits for Increasing HRV

These are scientifically proven examples for increasing the body's relaxation — which diminishes stress, improves our immune function, and causes us to feel better:

- Adopt a Mediterranean-inspired diet, or at least head in that direction.
- Consume omega-3 fatty acids (fish, grass fed-beef, walnuts).
- Use probiotics to replenish your “gut buddies” or intestinal biome.
- Consume enough B vitamins through leafy vegetables, beans, eggs, and whole unprocessed grains.
- Consume more polyphenols from berries, fruits, nuts, and vegetables.
- Avoid processed foods whenever possible.
- Stay hydrated with **water** every hour.

## Eating Habits to Avoid

- Sugary foods of all kinds
- Foods high in saturated or trans-fat
- High-glycemic carbohydrates like french fries and processed grains
- Sugar-laden soft drinks and fruit juices — replace with water
- Processed foods

Joel Fuhrman, M.D., *NY Times* best-selling author and food guru, in his very well researched book *Super Immunity*, makes the point that a diet with a portfolio of immune system strengthening foods will offer significant protection against viral and other acute illnesses as well as most chronic conditions such as cancer, Alzheimer's, and others. His acronym for these super foods is **GOMBBS** or:

**G**reens  
**O**nions  
**M**ushrooms  
**B**erries  
**B**eans  
**S**eeds

He also lists them in another format:

## Top Super Foods for Super Immunity

- Kale / Collards / Mustard Greens
- Arugula / Watercress
- Green Lettuce & Cabbage
- Broccoli & Brussels Sprouts
- Carrots & Tomatoes
- Onions & Garlic
- Mushrooms
- Pomegranates
- Berries (all types)
- Seeds (flax, chia, sesame, sunflower)



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## The Bottom Line

To feel better, we all need to eat the right foods. Eating the right foods:

- Promotes improved HRV. (We are **more relaxed, and less stressed.**)
- Supplies nutrients needed for good brain health.
- Improves your ability to sleep and recover.
- Encourages gut flora to produce “feel good” neurotransmitters. **We feel better.**
- Eliminates mood swings caused by wild fluctuations in blood glucose.
- Makes our **immune system stronger** so we can ward off viral and other infectious diseases.



### JOY'S PEARL

“Eating the right foods at the right time will make you feel better for all the right reasons. It diminishes stress and boosts your immune system at the same time. Double win.”

## Today's #1 Task •••••

Create your next grocery list of **healthy real food**. Veggies, fruit, pasture-fed meats, and wild-caught fish are optimal. In these trying times, optimal may not be achievable, so frozen veggies and fruits, corn-fed beef and chicken and farm-raised fish may have to do.

Remember: **Limit the processed foods.**

## Today's #2 Task •••••

Prepare and eat those real foods. Yum. Great taste that is great for you, your body and your mind. Cook more veggies than you need and have “planned-overs” for breakfast or whatever.

## Today's #3 Task •••••

**Stay hydrated.** De-hydration is a stressor and major immune depletor. Be mindful of your fluid intake and drink plenty of water. (Remember that juices and energy drinks contain that kryptonite, sugar.)