

A person is shown from the back, with their arms raised in a 'V' shape. They are wearing a dark, long-sleeved top. The background is a bright, golden sunset over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the scene in warm tones. The person's hair is dark and appears to be blowing in the wind.

INTRO TO IMMUNOLOGY

Resilience, Immune Responses,
and Gut Health

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What is Resilience?

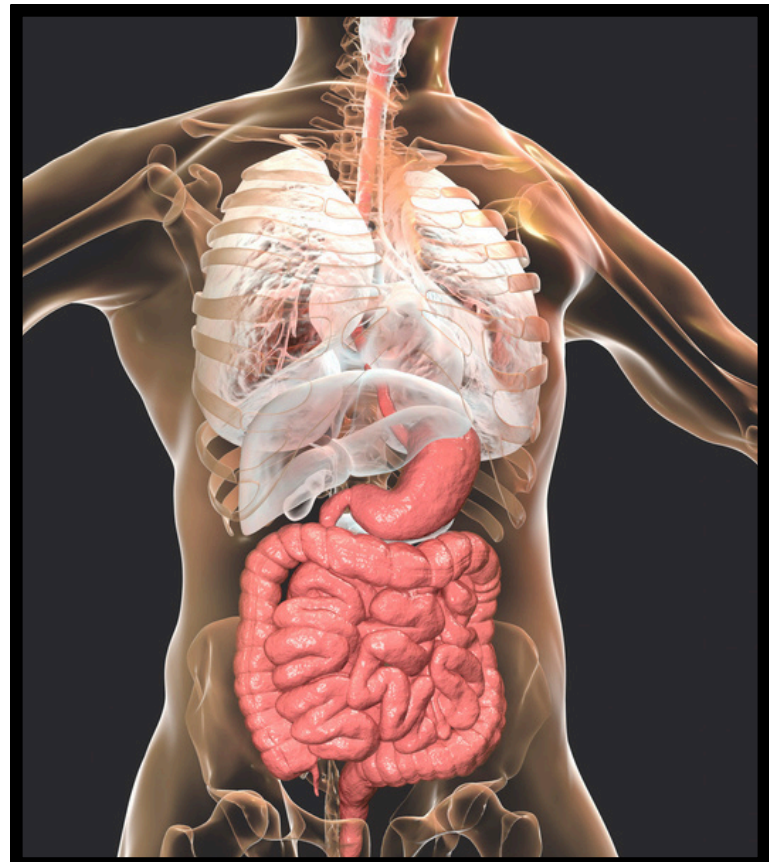
Immunological resilience enables our bodies to maintain good health or recover more swiftly after encountering a virus, harmful bacteria, or toxins.

A robust and resilient microbiome is essential for both our mental health and immune system. Although developing resilience is a gradual process, there are various practices we can adopt to enhance our overall immunological resilience.

Did you know?

Trillions of microbes reside in the intestines, creating a complex ecological community that impacts both normal bodily functions and vulnerability to diseases.

Engaging in regular, mindful practices that promote gut health can help establish a solid foundation and bolster our body's resilience against external threats.



Front-Line Defense

Our skin and mucous membranes act as the initial barrier against external threats by preventing pathogens from entering our bodies. These mechanisms are specifically designed to capture foreign materials and expel them through actions like coughing and sneezing. They also contain antimicrobials, acids, or enzymes that work to inhibit the growth of or eliminate microorganisms.

Innate Response

The innate immune response serves as the body's initial defense against invading pathogens—such as viruses, bacteria, or other microorganisms—and injuries. This response includes the activation of various cells, including phagocytes, neutrophils, dendritic cells, mast cells, and eosinophils, which ideally collaborate to eliminate the invading pathogens, initiate the healing process, and trigger the adaptive immune response.

Adaptive Response

Although the innate immune response acts quickly, the adaptive immune response is more specialized and often more effective. It can specifically identify a pathogen and 'remember' it for faster response upon future exposure. For example, once a person has been exposed to the chickenpox virus, they develop immunity to it, thanks to the adaptive immune system.

**Immune response:
When you contract a cold virus, your body's innate immune response triggers symptoms like a runny nose, cough, itchy eyes, and more.**



GUT HEALTH & IMMUNITY

Why it's important

Seventy percent of your immune system resides in your gut, which means that your gut health significantly influences your overall immune health.

Your gut houses more than 100 trillion bacteria, collectively referred to as your gut microbiome. Within this community, some bacteria are considered "good," while others are deemed "bad." These gut bacteria interact with your immune cells and can affect your body's response to infections.

This is why maintaining a balanced gut is essential for a robust immune system. Here are two ways to nurture your gut:

Probiotics

Probiotics are foods or supplements packed with live beneficial bacteria. Incorporating probiotics into your diet aids in replenishing helpful microbes, which contributes to maintaining a balanced microbiome.

Here are some foods rich in probiotics that can assist in restoring your friendly flora:

- Yogurt
- Kefir
- Kombucha
- Miso
- Sauerkraut
- Kimchi
- Tempeh
- Natto

You can also take probiotic supplements to repopulate your gut with good bacteria.

Prebiotics

If you want your friendly flora to flourish, it's essential to nourish them properly. This is where prebiotics come into play. Prebiotics are a unique type of fiber that serves as food for your gut bacteria.

Here are some foods rich in prebiotic fiber:

- Chicory root
- Jerusalem artichoke
- Dandelion greens
- Burdock root
- Green bananas
- Asparagus
- Leeks
- Garlic
- Onions
- Apples
- Oats
- Flaxseed
- Barley



A photograph of a man and a woman in a hospital setting. The man, on the left, has a beard and is smiling while flexing his right bicep. The woman, on the right, is also smiling and flexing her right bicep. They are both wearing light blue hospital gowns. The background shows a hospital room with blue walls and a window.

Learn more and find resources

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