



## Looking for a Sample one-day Menu to Boost Children's Immunity? Look no Further!

Strengthening our immune system amid the COVID-19 outbreak is so important when it comes to preventing infections and the occurrence of different types of illnesses.

Decreased immunity, particularly in children, is often linked with poor nutrition. Good nutrition, in conjunction with getting enough sleep, regular physical activity and good personal hygiene, can reduce our - *and our little people's* - susceptibility to illness.

Parents and other caregivers serve as nutritional gatekeepers and have the responsibility of keeping children healthy and well-nourished.

That said, it is important to remember that there is no single food or supplement that can protect children from getting sick. However, a well-balanced diet can support a child's immune system, and in turn, influence their bodies' capability to fight infections.

When it comes to boosting children's immune systems there are key nutrients we can focus on, including the following:

Nutrient	Function	Sources
Protein	Helps to build immune system cells including antibodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Animal-based: Lean meat, chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, milk</li><li>• Plant-based: Beans, soy products, nuts and seeds</li></ul>
Vitamin A	Helps in immune system response regulation; keeps epithelial tissues and the respiratory system healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yellow and orange fruits and vegetables: Carrots, squash, cantaloupe, pumpkin, papaya, sweet potatoes</li><li>• Green leafy vegetables: spinach and broccoli</li></ul>
Vitamin C	Has antioxidant properties that protect cells from damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Citrus fruits (oranges, tangerines, grapefruits)</li><li>• Papaya</li><li>• Capsicums</li><li>• Brussels sprouts</li><li>• Berries</li></ul>
Vitamin D	Regulates immune cell function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fortified food items (milk, cereals)</li><li>• Fatty fish (mackerel, salmon, tuna)</li><li>• Sunshine</li></ul>
Vitamin E	Has antioxidant properties that protect cells from damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Almonds</li><li>• Peanuts</li><li>• Sunflower seeds</li><li>• Vegetable oil</li></ul>
Zinc	Helps to create new immune cells, and contributes to the body's ability to heal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lean meat</li><li>• Poultry</li><li>• Milk</li><li>• Whole grains and seeds</li></ul>

Need ideas on how you can create a kid-friendly, immune boosting meal? Well, worry no more! Here's a one-day sample menu that complies with Australian Dietary Guidelines and recommended daily intakes of standard food servings per one day for children aged 4-8 years.



**Breakfast: SWEET POTATO PANCAKES**

The best sources of carbohydrates are food items with low glycaemic index, and that includes sweet potato. This dish will not only keep children fuller for longer, but will also provide vitamins and minerals for increased immunity.

**Ingredients:**

- ½ medium sweet potato, baked and cooled (around 115 grams)
- 1 large egg
- Cinnamon powder (optional)
- Nuts (optional)
- 1 cup of milk (to serve)

**Servings per food group:**

Grains – 1

Protein – 0.5

Dairy – 1

**Yields:**

2 pieces of 4-inch pancakes

**Serves:**

1 child

**Nutrition facts per serving:**

Energy	1287 kJ
Protein	17.5 g
Total fat	12.6 g
Total carbohydrates	29.9 g
Vitamin A (RE)	1377 mcg
Vitamin C	29 mg
Vitamin D	3.54 mcg
Vitamin E	2.01 mg
Zinc	2.03 mg

**Method:**

1. In a small bowl, mash sweet potato and egg together. Alternatively, using a food processor or blender, combine the ingredients and blend until smooth. Set aside.
2. Heat a non-stick pan or skillet over medium heat. Add 1/8 cup of the batter and cook for 2-3 minutes. Flip the pancake using a spatula and cook the other side.
3. Repeat with the remaining batter.
4. Top with nuts and serve immediately with a glass of milk. You may sprinkle with cinnamon for a pinch of extra flavor.



### Morning Snack: PEANUT BUTTER AND BANANA SANDWICH

Who knew snacking could be this healthy? Peanut butter is a rich source of protein and contains essential vitamins and minerals. Banana adds more to its nutritional value making this simple snack nutrient-packed.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 slices whole wheat bread
- 1 tablespoon natural peanut butter, no added sugar
- ½ a banana

#### Servings per food group:

Fruit – 0.5

Grains – 2

#### Yields:

1 sandwich

#### Serves:

1 child

#### Nutrition facts per serving:

Energy	1048 kJ
Protein	9.4 g
Total fat	4.4 g
Total carbohydrates	39.3 g
Vitamin A (RE)	4 mcg
Vitamin C	3 mg
Vitamin D	0 mcg
Vitamin E	0.68 mg
Zinc	1.1 mg

#### Method:

1. Gather all ingredients.
2. Thinly slice the banana.
3. Spread the peanut butter on one slice of bread. Place the banana slices on top.
4. Place the two slices of bread together and serve.



### Lunch: TUNA PUMPKIN NUGGETS

This dish will make eating vegetables easy-peasy. Pumpkin is well known for being full of Vitamin A and tuna is a rich source of protein and antioxidants.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1 cup pumpkin, boiled and mashed
- ½ cup tuna flakes (around 115 grams)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup plain flour
- 1 tbsp cooking oil
- Pepper, cayenne powder (to taste, optional)
- Cooked brown rice, to serve

#### Servings per food group:

Vegetables – 2

Grains – 1

Protein – 0.5

#### Yields:

6 pieces of 2-3 inch nuggets

#### Serves:

2 children

#### Nutrition facts per serving:

Energy	1199 kJ
Protein	18.5 g
Total fat	4.0 g
Total carbohydrates	43.1 g
Vitamin A (RE)	118.7 mcg
Vitamin C	2.7 mg
Vitamin D	2.2 mcg
Vitamin E	0.6 mg
Zinc	0.8 mg

#### Method:

1. In a mixing bowl, combine cooked pumpkin, flour, and egg. Mix until it forms a dough. Add more flour for better consistency, if needed.
2. In a non-stick skillet, add cooking oil and sauté garlic until golden brown. Add tuna and cook for 2-3 minutes over medium heat.
3. Add sautéed ingredients to the dough. Mix well so ingredients are well distributed. Allow to cool.
4. Form the dough into nugget-size pieces.
5. Fry the nuggets in cooking oil until golden brown.
6. For each serving, serve 2-3 nuggets with ½ cup of cooked brown rice.



### Afternoon Snack: MANGO ORANGE SMOOTHIE

Kids will totally love this antioxidant loaded tropical fruit drink! Mangoes and oranges are rich in Vitamin C to help boost kids' immunity.

#### Ingredients:

- ½ cup cubed ripe mango (use frozen if mangoes are not in season)
- ½ small orange, clementine, or tangerine, peeled
- ½ cup milk or plain yogurt
- ½ tsp honey

#### Servings per food group:

Fruit – 1

Dairy – 0.5

#### Yields:

1 smoothie

#### Serves:

1 child

#### Nutrition facts per serving:

Energy	642 kJ
Protein	55.8 g
Total fat	3.5 g
Total carbohydrates	25.2 g
Vitamin A (RE)	168 mcg
Vitamin C	50 mg
Vitamin D	0.05 mcg
Vitamin E	0.83 mg
Zinc	0.56 mg

#### Method:

1. In a blender or food processor, combine all ingredients and blend for 2-3 minutes or until texture becomes lump free. You may add more milk, if preferred.
2. Add ice cubes to the mixture, if desired.



### Dinner: SPINACH CHICKEN SESAME

Did you know that around 70 per cent of our immune system is in the gut? Luckily, this dish is a good source of Vitamin A, Vitamin C and Zinc, and is loaded with dietary fibre to encourage normal bowel movement and improved gut health.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups spinach, sliced
- ¼ cup chicken, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp onion, minced
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- Pepper to taste
- Cooked brown rice, to serve

#### Servings per food group:

Vegetables – 2  
Grains – 1  
Protein – 0.5

#### Yields:

2 bowls

#### Serves:

2 children

#### Nutrition facts per serving:

Energy	866 kJ
Protein	16.2 g
Total fat	2.7 g
Total carbohydrates	27.3 g
Vitamin A (RE)	276 mcg
Vitamin C	13 mg
Vitamin D	2.4 mcg
Vitamin E	1.34 mg
Zinc	0.94 mg

#### Method:

1. Heat a non-stick skillet over medium heat. Sauté garlic, onion, and diced chicken in sesame oil. Season with soy sauce.
2. Add spinach and simmer until cooked. Season with pepper to taste.
3. Divide into two serving portions.
4. For one serving, serve with ½ cup of brown rice.