Importance of Nutrition During COVID-19

Nutrition has always played a large part in supporting a person's immune system. There is currently no strong evidence that healthy eating prevents or lowers the symptoms of COVID-19 directly. However, there is strong correlation between a healthy diet and a well-balanced immune system, and a stronger immune system helps fight off disease.

Breakdown of COVID-19:

- Respiratory illness spread by a virus
- A person can become infected through close contact, respiratory droplets from a cough or sneeze, and by touching a surface with the virus on it then touching your eyes, mouth, or nose.
- Symptoms include: fever, cough, shortness of breath
- A person should seek medical attention if they are experiencing trouble breathing, chest pain, or any of the symptoms listed above.

High Risk for COVID-19:
People with chronic heart and respiratory conditions, diabetes, obesity, liver disease, and chronic kidney disease. All of these conditions correlate with diet and nutrition.
Foods that boost immune health:

**Vitamin C Rich Foods**
Citrus fruits/juices, kiwi, red and green peppers, broccoli, and strawberries are all rich in Vitamin C. Vitamin C is an antioxidant that attacks harmful molecules that can damage the immune system. Vitamin C is a common supplement that can enhance immune health.

**Vitamin E Rich Foods**
Almonds, hazelnuts, and peanut butter are one of the many foods that contain greats amounts of Vitamin E. Vitamin E is like Vitamin C in that it is an antioxidant that fights against harmful molecules in our body that can damage a person’s immune system.
Zinc Rich Foods
Zinc plays an important role in building the various cells of our immune system. Research has shown that people with zinc deficiency are more prone to infection. Foods that are rich in zinc include chick peas, beans, and oysters.

Carotenoids
Carotenoids are a pigment found in various plants that also acts as antioxidant like Vitamin C and E. When eating foods with carotenoids, they are transmitted into Vitamin A. Vitamin A is a strong supporter of immune health. Foods that are large amounts of carotenoids are carrots, kale, mango, papaya, sweet potatoes, and spinach.

Protein
The cells of our immune system rely on protein to function. It is important to maintain healthy levels of protein for our immune system and overall body to remain strong and functional. Foods such as boneless chicken, Greek yogurt, and egg whites contain great protein.
Benefits of a healthy lifestyle

By including the foods listed above in a person's daily diet, they will see benefits in their energy levels and the nutrients that are needed to help fight off diseases. Any deficiencies in Vitamins C, E, A, zinc, protein, or carotenoids will weaken a person's immune system and therefore lower their capabilities to fight off infections such as COVID-19.

Additionally, healthy lifestyles lead to a decrease in obesity, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions that can make a person more susceptible to COVID-19.

Grocery Shopping Tips during COVID-19:
- Make a list before going to limit time needed and exposure in store (make sure to include some of these healthy foods!)
- Plan meals and new recipes before going. Try shopping on the perimeter of the store where the fresh produce, dairy, and meats are located.
- Wear your protective mask
- Use Germ-X throughout the store
- Wipe down cart before use
- Wipe down groceries when you get home

References
- https://nutrition.org/making health and nutrition a priority during the coronavirus covid 19 pandemic/
- https://www.verywellhealth.com/types of foods to boost your immune system 89020