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KEEP UP THE FIGHT WITH A HEALTHY IMMUNE SYSTEM

Vaccines have arrived and the Frederick County Health Department is working diligently to get everyone immunized. Here is what is happening to clarify procedures:

Frederick County Government has developed an online pre-registration system. If you live or work in Frederick County and are interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, please complete the COVID-19 Vaccine Interest Form located in the blue box on their Vaccine Website. The link is <https://health.frederickcountymd.gov/629/COVID-19-Vaccine>

- Completing this form does NOT make you an appointment to get the vaccine.
- We will contact people who have registered on this form by priority group as we receive more vaccine.
- You will be contacted by the email you provide in the form. When you are contacted, you will need to schedule your appointment online.
- You only need to complete the form once.
- It may be several days, weeks, or longer until you are contacted since it depends on vaccine availability.
- We are not keeping a separate list to contact people for excess doses at the end of clinics. Since we changed our process to the pre-registration form, we will be reaching out to people in the currently eligible priority groups who have pre-registered if we have excess doses.

Priority groups 1A, 1B, and 1C are all currently eligible, but there isn't enough vaccine for everyone who is eligible. We are currently vaccinating 1A and people 75 years and older, and will open to more groups as soon as we have sufficient vaccine.

Our Frederick County Senior Services Division in cooperation with the Frederick County Health Department offered an excellent virtual webinar on January 29th – **Arm Yourself with COVID Vaccine Information**, *A Virtual Workshop for Older Adults and Others Seeking Information About COVID-19 Precautions, Vaccine Safety and Future Clinics*. The workshop was presented through Webex and Facebook. The video is available for viewing at [Facebook.com/FredCoMDSeniorServices](https://www.facebook.com/FredCoMDSeniorServices) or search Facebook for Frederick County Senior Services Division.

What can you do while you wait for vaccination? Eat foods that are nutrient dense. There is not one magic food or supplement. The key is to include a wide variety of foods to get these nutrients in your daily meals. Despite our billion dollar spending on supplements in the US nutrients from real food are always superior.

Every meal and snack is an opportunity to boost our nutrient intake. Instead of focusing on what you should not eat, change your thinking to what real foods can you eat to boost your immunity. Here are some nutrients to focus on to build a healthy immune system:

Protein is VITAL for a healthy immune system, especially for healing and recovery. All animal foods are excellent sources – eggs, dairy products, lean meats, seafood, fish and poultry. There are many plant based sources including all dried beans and legumes, soy products (tofu, soy milk, and tempura), nuts and nut butters, and seeds.

Vitamin A protects against infections by keeping your digestive and respiratory system healthy. Good food sources of vitamin A include beef liver, eggs and many vegetables - sweet potatoes, carrots, pumpkin, spinach, sweet red bell peppers, black eye peas, broccoli, and tomato juice. Fruits high in vitamin A include cantaloupe, mangos, and dried apricots. Milk and many breakfast cereals are fortified with vitamin A.

Vitamin C plays a role in the formation of antibodies, an important foundation for a healthy immune system. There are a variety of foods that are good sources. Fruit sources include oranges, grapefruit, kiwi, strawberries, and cantaloupe. Many vegetables are high in Vitamin C including bell peppers (all colors), broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, baked potatoes, tomatoes, spinach and green peas. Remember 100% juices made from these fruits and tomato and V-8 juice are excellent sources.

Vitamin E is an antioxidant that may support immune function. Include vitamin E in your diet with fortified cereals, sunflower seeds, almonds, sunflower and safflower oil, hazelnuts, peanut butter and peanuts.

Zinc is well-known to help with immunity against illnesses. It is better absorbed from animal sources such as seafood (oysters, Alaska king crab, lobster), lean beef, pork and poultry. Cow's milk, yogurt, and cheese (Swiss, cheddar, mozzarella) are other good animal sources. Plant-based sources high in zinc are pumpkin seeds, cashews, and almonds; baked beans, chickpeas and kidney beans) and fortified cereals.

Vitamin D helps with immune responses to protect you from illness. Significant sources of this vitamin in your diet include, fatty fish (specifically rainbow trout, sockeye salmon, sardines, tuna fish), white mushrooms exposed to UV light, eggs, as well as vitamin-D fortified cow's milk, non-dairy beverages (soy, almond, oat) and 100% fruit juices.

Other nutrients, including vitamins B6 and B12, and minerals such as copper, folate, selenium and iron may also promote a healthy immune system. For a detailed list of each nutrient visit the National Institute of Health Office of Dietary Supplements Fact Sheets at <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/list-all/>

Probiotics are “good” bacteria that support healthy digestion and a protective immune system. They can be found in cultured dairy products like yogurt and kefir and in fermented foods such as kimchi, sauerkraut and kombucha.

Aim for variety in the diet to optimize nutrition. To illustrate the point look over the foods listed in the paragraphs above which include over 50 different options.

Fruits and vegetables are key, so aim for 5 to 7 servings daily. All types are nutritious - canned, frozen, dried, and fresh. The frozen vegetable selection is bursting with more choices than ever which take less than 10 minutes to cook in the microwave. Delicious dishes like creamed spinach, roasted Brussel sprouts, and sweet potato soufflé,

Practically every vegetable is available canned. If you are concerned about added salt then pour it into a colander and rinse with water which removes 39% of the sodium. A quicker method is canned vegetables with no added salt.

Frozen fruits are delicious as they are packed the day they are picked. There are so many choices – blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, cherries, peaches, pineapple, even mango. I use them frequently to avoid waste since I often forget to use produce before it goes bad. Add to your morning cereal, put in a smoothie, make a fruit salad or yogurt parfait, use to prepare pies and cobblers.

A healthy immune system is about balance between a healthy diet, adequate sleep, and managing the stress in your life. Aim to get 7 to 9 hours sleep daily for adults and 8 to 14 hours for children. Simplify your expectations and routines. Try different methods for stress management including meditation, listening to music and writing in a journal.

FIVE MINUTE SPINACH

1 pound baby spinach, washed & ready to use
1/2 teaspoon Crazy Jane's mixed up salt (optional)

Place spinach in large glass Pyrex dish. Sprinkle with seasoning if desired. Add 1 teaspoon water. Cover with glass top and cook for 5 minutes in microwave on high setting.

CARROTS WITH DILL

1 pound fresh or frozen carrots
1 tablespoon dried dill
1 tablespoon butter or margarine

Wash carrots and slice. Sprinkle with dill. Steam or cook in microwave in a small amount of water. Drain and add butter or margarine

VITALITY DRINK

Delicious drink for breakfast or as a between meal snack

1/2 cup fresh leafy greens like spinach or kale
1/2 cup fresh or frozen fruit
1/3 cup plain canned pumpkin
1 tablespoon chia seeds (optional)
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

VITALITY DRINK (continued)

1 cup cows milk or soy milk
1/2 cup 100% fruit juice
4 ice cubes

Combine all ingredients in blender or food processor and blend on high until smooth. Let sit for 1 minute to thicken before serving. Makes 2 servings.

CHEESE QUICHE

Great inexpensive dish for breakfast or dinner

1 prepared piecrust
3 cups shredded cheese such as cheddar or Swiss Gruyere
1/2 to 1 cup vegetable filling of your choice – diced onion, diced green peppers, sliced mushrooms, spinach, broccoli, shredded carrots, olives
6 eggs
1 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon salt

HEAT oven to 375°F. Spread shredded cheese evenly in bottom of piecrust. Top with vegetable fillings of your choice. Beat eggs, milk, thyme and salt in medium bowl and pour over filling in piecrust. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes until the center is almost set but jiggles slightly when dish is gently shaken. Remove from oven and let stand for 5 minutes. When you cut quiche into wedges the knife should come out clean which indicates the quiche is done. Resource: www.incredibleegg.org

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