

## Ask the Expert: Autoimmune Disease and Prevention

Written by Caroline Parker; Purdue University Dietetics & Nutrition, Fitness, and Health 2021

Autoimmune disease is a condition where the body's defense system fights against the body. The body's defense system has the important job of killing foreign invaders like bacteria or viruses that cause sickness. In autoimmune disease, the defense or immune system can't tell the difference between these foreign invaders and regular body cells, so body cells get attacked. Examples of autoimmune diseases include multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, type 1 diabetes, and psoriasis.

Even though the severity of autoimmune diseases has decreased over the years, many people still have this condition. Research has shown that autoimmune diseases stem from genetic factors. This means that if one person in a family has an autoimmune disease, there is a higher chance that other people in the family will also have the disease. What many people may not know, is that the places we live and the behaviors we have also add to getting an autoimmune disease.

For example, having poor self-care and sanitary practices may put added strain on the body's defense system. Having poor health may also make it difficult to fight infections. Being overwhelmed by work can add stress and risk for autoimmune disease. Smoking, drinking too much alcohol, not getting enough physical activity, and eating too many calories are other behaviors that add to getting an autoimmune disease.

In order to stay healthy and prevent the development of an autoimmune disease, it is important to have overall healthy habits. Taking care of yourself, your hygiene, reducing your stress levels, keeping alcohol moderate or low, not smoking, eating a healthy diet and getting physical activity every day are things that can lessen the chance of getting an autoimmune disease.



## HEALTHY HABITS

### IN THIS ISSUE

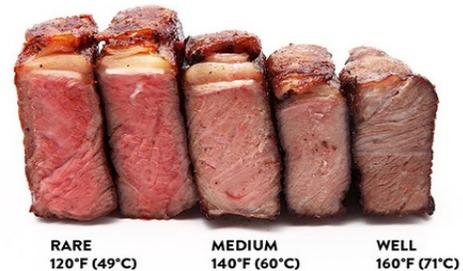
Ask the Expert: Autoimmune Disease and Prevention	1
Food Safety: Eating Out with An Autoimmune Disease	2
Eating Right: Keeping A Strong Immune System	3
In the News: Basics of HIV Prevention	4

# Food Safety: Eating Out With An Autoimmune Disease

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Food safety is important for everyone, but it is especially important for those with an autoimmune disease. People with weakened immune systems have a difficult time fighting off infection, including foodborne illness. In order to avoid foodborne illness while eating out, follow these basic tips.

1. Make sure the menu item ordered does not contain uncooked ingredients like eggs, sprouts, meat, poultry, or seafood. When in doubt, ask the waiter. If the waiter is not sure, choose another menu item.
2. Avoid any meat that is cooked rare.
3. It is important to ask how foods, such as meat, have been cooked. Meat should be cooked to a certain minimum internal temperature. If meat is undercooked, the chances of getting a foodborne illness is higher.
4. If taking home leftovers, make sure to refrigerate them as soon as you get home, or within 2 hours of buying the food. If it is hot outside, refrigerate the food within 1 hour of purchasing.



Source: <https://www.fda.gov/media/83744/download>, <https://www.quora.com/Whats-The-difference-Between-Rare-Medium-And-Well-Done-Steak>

## Meatless Chili

### Ingredients (6 servings)

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 cans black beans\*, drained/rinsed
- 1 can corn\*, drained/rinsed
- 1 can diced tomatoes\* - low sodium
- 3 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

### Directions

1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion, and cook for 4 minutes.
2. Add the carrots to the pot, and cook for another 5 minutes. Stir occasionally.
3. Add the chili powder to the pot, stir, and cook for 1 minute.
4. Add beans, corn, tomatoes, water, and salt. Stir to combine.
5. Bring chili to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 15-20 minutes.

\*Included in TEFAP



### Nutrition Facts (per 1 cup)

Calories: 250  
Protein: 12g  
Carbs: 44g

Sources: <https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/healthy-recipes/>, <https://bloximages.chicago2.vip.townnews.com/news-herald.com/content/tncms/assets/v3/editorial/4/24/424ad97d-938d-5103-86b9-33d30d5f993d/5c742aab00a95.image.jpg?resize=1200%2C1200>

# Eating Right: Keeping A Strong Immune System

Written by Caroline Parker; Purdue University Dietetics & Nutrition, Fitness, and Health 2021

One of the best things a person can do for their immune system is to have healthy eating habits. A strong immune system is better at fighting off infection from bacteria and viruses. There are many immune system supporting nutrients.

1. **Beta Carotene:** People often associate this nutrient with carrots, but it is also found in sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, mango, broccoli, and tomatoes.
2. **Vitamin C:** This vitamin is common in citrus fruits such as oranges and limes. It is also found in berries, melons, tomatoes, bell peppers, and broccoli.
3. **Vitamin D:** Meat, such as fatty fish and eggs, and dairy products are common sources of vitamin D. Milk and juice are commonly fortified with vitamin D.
4. **Zinc:** This nutrient is found in both meat and vegetables. Examples include beef, seafood, wheat germ, beans, nuts, and tofu. Keep in mind that zinc from animal sources is better absorbed than zinc from plant sources.
5. **Probiotics:** They are considered a “good” bacteria for the body and are mostly found in cultured dairy products like yogurt.
6. **Protein:** This essential macronutrient can be found in animal and plant sources such as milk, yogurt, eggs, seafood, nuts, seeds, beans, and lentils.



Make a goal to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Overall, it is important to focus on balance and eating foods from all food groups.

For those with autoimmune diseases such as HIV, make sure to consume adequate calories to maintain a healthy weight, add protein to every meal, eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, talk with your doctor about potential supplements, and take food safety seriously. Eating a healthy diet has been shown to lessen disease symptoms and the side effects of medications, increase quality of life and improve the ability to fight off infections.



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This newsletter is edited by Caroline Parker and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## In The News: Basics of HIV Prevention

Written by Jamie Berman; Purdue University Nutrition & Dietetics 2021

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can be spread from one person to another by body fluids of an infected person coming into contact with the mucous membranes or damaged tissue of another person. These fluids include: blood, semen, pre seminal fluids, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. Common ways to spread these fluids are through using the same needles to inject drugs, and having unprotected sex with an HIV positive partner. HIV can also be spread from a mother to her baby through breast milk. HIV is not spread through hugs, handshakes, or touching objects a person with HIV has come into contact with.

There are many ways to protect yourself from getting HIV. For example, make sure you and your sexual partner get tested for HIV. Also, make sure to always have protected sex. If you think you may have a sexually transmitted disease (STD), it is important to get tested and treated because having an STD can increase your chances of getting HIV. Lastly, do not inject drugs. If you do, make sure to never share needles with others.

People who are at high risk of getting HIV may have the option of taking medications called pre-exposure prophylaxis or post-exposure prophylaxis. These medications prevent HIV infection. Talk to your doctor if you believe you are at risk for getting HIV.

Source: <https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets/basics-hiv-prevention>, [https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;\\_ylt=AwrcmuO71L9fBksAOiYPxQt;\\_ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3BpdnM-?p=HIV+prevention&ty](https://images.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;_ylt=AwrcmuO71L9fBksAOiYPxQt;_ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3BpdnM-?p=HIV+prevention&ty)

