

Basic Nutrition Guide

for

Prevention of

Atypical Pneumonia

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While Hong Kong citizens and medical professionals are fighting vigilantly against the outbreak of atypical pneumonia in this critical period, we must guard ourselves by observing personal and environmental hygiene as well as ensuring a well balanced diet.

You can maintain a healthy immune system by taking a balanced diet, with food from the following 5 food groups

- 1) cereal & grains
- 2) meat or meat alternatives
- 3) vegetables
- 4) fruits
- 5) milk & dairy products

Adequate amounts of vitamins A, B complex, C, E, iron, zinc, selenium, copper and folic acid, obtained through a balanced diet have immuno-modulating functions thus reducing the susceptibility to infectious disease. Of which, vitamins A, C and E, with their antioxidant properties, have received much acclamation.

Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid)

Role: As an antioxidant, it acts upon “free radicals”, averting or delaying heart disease and cancer. It is also vital in the production of collagen, needed for healthy skin, bones, teeth, gums, wound healing and aiding iron absorption.

Recommended amounts: US DRI recommends daily intake of 75mg for women, 90mg for men. Taking adequate portions of fruits and vegetables daily as part of a healthy diet will provide you with the required nutrients for the immune system to function efficiently.

There is evidence that smokers have increased needs for vitamin C. Smokers have lower concentrations of ascorbic acid in plasma and leucocytes than non-smokers. Therefore quitting smoking is beneficial.

Vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin, meaning that excessive amount may be excreted from the body via urine. To strengthen the immune system within a short period of time, you can aim at 1000mg per day. However, mega-dose of vitamin C intake may cause diarrhea and increased excretion of urinary oxalate. The tolerable upper intake level for vitamin C is not more than 2000mg per day.

Losses of vitamin C occur during food processing e.g. heating, refrigerating, etc. Therefore, eating greens and fruits fresh or using quick stir-fry preparation is encouraged. Choosing foods that are fortified with vitamin C e.g. breakfast cereal, unsweetened juices are also good alternatives.

Vitamin C Content of Selected Fruit and Vegetables

<u>Food</u>	<u>Average Content (mg)</u>
Papaya (half medium)	225
Cherry Tomato (10 pieces)	191
Cantaloupe (1 pound)	180
Guava (1 whole)	165
Honeydew Melon (1 pound)	113
Fresh Orange Juice (1 glass)	105
Sweet Pepper (1 medium)	95
Broccoli (1 cup, cooked)	95
Pomelo (2 slices)	90
Grapefruit (1 whole)	85
Brussels sprouts (1 cup, cooked)	84
Kiwi fruit (1 whole)	80
Orange (1 medium)	70
Mandarin (1 whole)	67
Mango (1 medium)	57
Strawberry (10 medium)	57
Cauliflower (1 cup, cooked)	55
Kale (1 cup, cooked)	53
Grapes (1 pound, with skin)	49
Green Salad (1 cup)	48
Cress (1 cup, raw)	35
Watermelon (1 pound)	32
Cherry (1 pound)	32
Banana (1 whole)	10
Pineapple (1 slice)	10
Apple (1 small)	8
Peach / Nectarine (1 whole)	6-7

*1 metric cup = 240ml

Dietitian recommends 2-3 fruits a day.

The followings are some practical ways to increase your vitamin C intake.

Breakfast: Home made vegetable/fruit juices
Breakfast cereals /yogurt with fruit slices

Main Meals: Quick vegetable stir-fry
Broccoli and cauliflower curry
Green papaya and chicken salad
Vegetable Lasagna
Spinach and mushroom quiche
Mixed greens in pita bread / sandwiches

Side Dishes: Home made salsa with fresh tomatoes
Steamed vegetables (e.g. Brussels Sprout)
Baked potato
Fresh green / fruit salad

Desserts: Fresh fruit crepe
Fresh papaya shake
Kiwi fruit tart / pie

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