

Boost your immunity: A guide to harness the immunity powerhouse of Vitamin C

Sonali Shenoy | Published: | 24th March 2020 06:55 PM



Seeking out the best sources of Vitamin C might be a worthwhile pursuit while you self quarantine this week. For one, it's a mighty immunity booster. And that's something we all need a little more of with COVID -19 concerns abounding. In a whirlwind of stockpiling on sanitisers and masks, pharmacy essentials and wrapping up 'work from home' tasks - it may have slipped your mind to firefight from within.

So we decided to do some research. And between a top nutritionist, two chefs and a marathon of questions on need-to-know specifics - we've got you covered. We tell you what to eat, how to eat, and how to cook. And you might want to bookmark our pantry essentials because apart from working wonders on your immune system, Vitamin C serves up high antioxidant functions, enables collagen production and is of great value to your bones, skin and teeth.

It's safe to say that C stands for 'can do almost everything.' And that's exactly the kind of nutritional powerhouse you want to stock up on during this epidemic crisis. Especially because, guess what: your body can neither produce nor store Vitamin C.

Fact file:

- The current daily value (DV) for vitamin C is 90 mg.

- A deficiency will reveal symptoms like bleeding gums, frequent infections, poor wound healing, anemia and scurvy

- Vitamin C rich fruits include amla (Indian gooseberry), lemon, guava, kiwi, papaya, orange, grapefruit, strawberries.

- Vitamin C rich veggies include bell peppers, broccoli, kale, tomatoes, green leafy veggies and parsley. You can mix 2-3 of these vegetables and juice it out or make a soup. Opt for consuming them raw only if they are organic. Otherwise best to sauté or stir fry them.



Effective ways to consume Vitamin C:

- Have whole fruits and avoid juicing them.

- Enjoy small amounts of amla candy made with organic jaggery powder, homemade amla pickle or just as an amla shot with a dash of rock salt, organic jaggery and black pepper.

- Simply squeezing lemon in water is another way of getting your vitamin C dose too.

- Vegetables like bell pepper and broccoli and leafy greens can be consumed raw (if organic), stir fried, sautéed or combined and enjoyed as a soup.

Hot damn!

Overheating your water (above 70 degrees) for your daily lemon tonic will undo all of its benefits. Vitamin C is sensitive to high heat!

So it is best to have vitamin C rich sources either in raw form or be cooked over low heat and small amount of water for a shorter time period to get the most of this powerful vitamin.



Five-star elixir

Star anise is a powerful spice rich in vitamin C and Shikimic acid which is the ingredient in Tamiflu as well. Simply add 2-3 star anise in a mug of warm water and let it steep for 10 to 15 minutes. Remove and sip slowly. Can also add turmeric, black pepper, Sri Lankan rolled cinnamon, garlic, ginger to make it a powerful elixir for immunity.

Don't over do it:

Vitamin C being water-soluble, any excess is usually excreted through urine rather than getting stored in the body. Hence it is generally safe to have it through natural sources. But when it comes to supplements one needs to be cautious with very high doses (2,000 or 3,000 mg or higher per day). In some people, high doses can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, gastritis, fatigue, heartburn, headache. People with chronic kidney or liver conditions, history of calcium-oxalate kidney stones or gout should also be careful with its over consumption.

(All nutritional inputs given by holistic nutritionist Prachi Acharekar Borkar.)



Vitamin C is one of the essential nutrients to build immunity due to its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory effect and helps production of lymphocytes to produce gamma interferon, one of the essential components of our immune system to fight viral infections. It also helps with repair and recovery of our body.

- Prachi Acharekar Borkar,

Holistic nutritionist; Lifestyle Expert with Luke Coutinho



Sweet Potato and raw Papaya Salad

(Portion - for a family of four)

Ingredients

Sweet Potato peeled (Cut Into Cubes) - 250 gms

Raw Papaya (thinly shredded) - 250 gms

Ice Berg Lettuce - 300 gms

Salted Peanuts - 50 gms

Chopped Coriander - 30 gms

Hand picked mint leaves - 50 gms

For Roasting of Sweet Potatoes

Olive oil or Pomace Oil - 2 tbsp

Paprika Powder - 1 Teaspoon

Ginger Powder - ½ Teaspoon

Salt as per requirement

Salad Dressing

Olive oil - 100 ml

Lemon juice - 3 Juices of lemon

Sliced Red chillies - 3

Palm sugar - 25 gms

Salt - as per requirement

Method:

Roast the sweet potatoes with the marinade in a pre-heated oven at 180 degrees centigrade for 15 mts until crisp and golden brown.

Cool them down

In a mixing bowl whisk all the ingredients of dressing to a smooth mixture and keep them aside

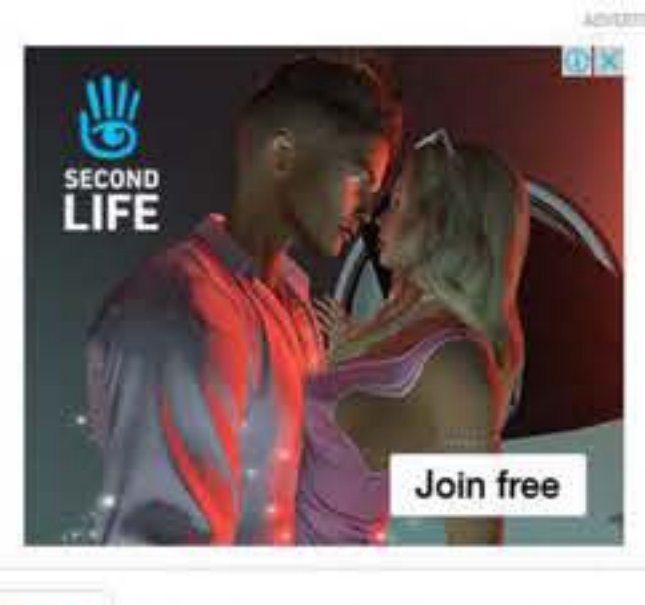
Assembling of the salad:

In a salad bowl assemble the lettuce - Papaya - Mint leaves and sweet potatoes in ascending order - Repeat until the whole quantity is finished.

Slowly drizzle the dressing over the top of salad without mixing too much - Keep a bowl of salad dressing separate can add more if necessary individually

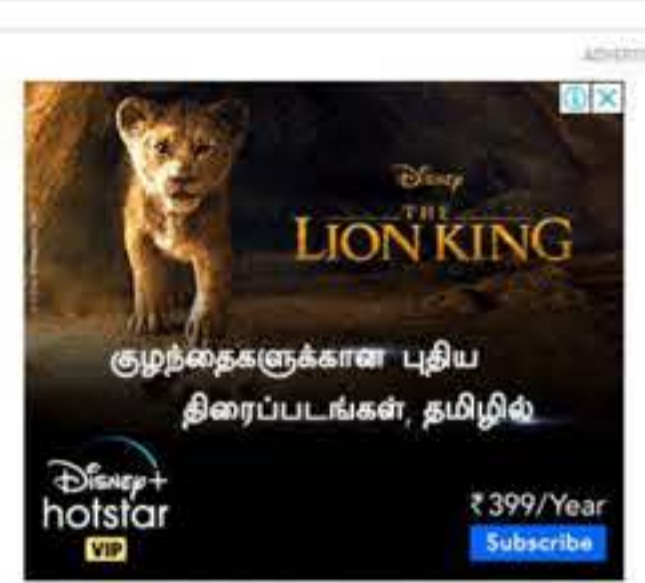
Keep toasted peanut, Sliced cucumbers, - chilli soya as a separate condiments if needed so can be used as per personal favourites.

(Contributed by Chef Manikandan Vijayakumar of Chef's M&N consulting firm)



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