Health Begins With What You Eat

One of the most effective ways to promote immune health is to eat a healthful diet. So what does that mean? Your diet should include a variety of foods and beverages and include the following tips:

- **Eat Regularly.** Whether you consume three square meals or prefer six smaller meals throughout the day, make sure you maintain an eating schedule that works for you.
- **Focus on Fruits and Vegetables.** Make at least one fruit or vegetable a part of each meal. Mix it up with canned soup, a frozen vegetable medley or a fresh vegetable or fruit salad.
- **Go Whole Grains and Fiber.** Make sure that half of your breads, cereals, pastas and rice are whole grain products. Double check the label to make sure that you’re eating 100 percent whole grain. Fiber is also important to health. Make an effort to choose foods with more than 3 grams of fiber per serving.
- **Include Dairy and Protein Products.** Make sure to have low-fat dairy, such as yogurt, milk and cheese, lean meat, poultry, seafood, soy, beans, nuts or eggs at most meals.
- **Make a Little Time for Treats.** Enjoy higher calorie foods and beverages without feeling guilty by giving yourself a little less and/or eating them less frequently.
Dietary Reference Intakes are important for ensuring that you are meeting your daily requirements for various nutrients. You can refer to the International Food Information Council Foundation website for more information on how to meet your dietary needs.

Flavonoids Add Flavor
Flavonoids are an ingredient in some foods that offer added health benefits. They can be found in berries, bananas, cocoa, grapes, citrus foods, onions, apples, and tea. Some flavonoids help to bolster our cellular defenses, and may help counter the effects of harmful substances in our body that are a result of stress.

Vitamins and Minerals
Some vitamins are especially helpful for supporting immune health. Make sure that your diet includes these important vitamins and minerals:

- **Vitamin C**, one of the best-known immune supporting vitamins, is found in citrus fruits and juice, strawberries, bell peppers and certain fortified foods and beverages.
- **Vitamin A** helps maintain vision and supports the immune system. It is found in milk, eggs, carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach and certain fortified foods and beverages.
- **Vitamin E**, which helps protect our hearts and immune system, is found in nuts, like sunflower seeds, almonds and hazelnuts, and oils, including soybean, olive and canola oils.
- **Vitamins B₆ and B₁₂** also help maintain healthy immune function and can be found in meat, beans, fish and certain ready-to-eat cereals.
- **Vitamin D** has also been shown to help support the immune system and can be found in oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, and sardines, and also in certain fortified foods, including yogurt, milk, certain cereals, and juices. Certain dietary supplements also provide vitamin D.
- **Selenium** has been shown to support immune function. Increase intake of selenium by consuming foods rich in selenium like red meat, garlic and eggs, or try a daily multivitamin with selenium.

For More Information on Fighting Bac! please visit: www.fightbac.org