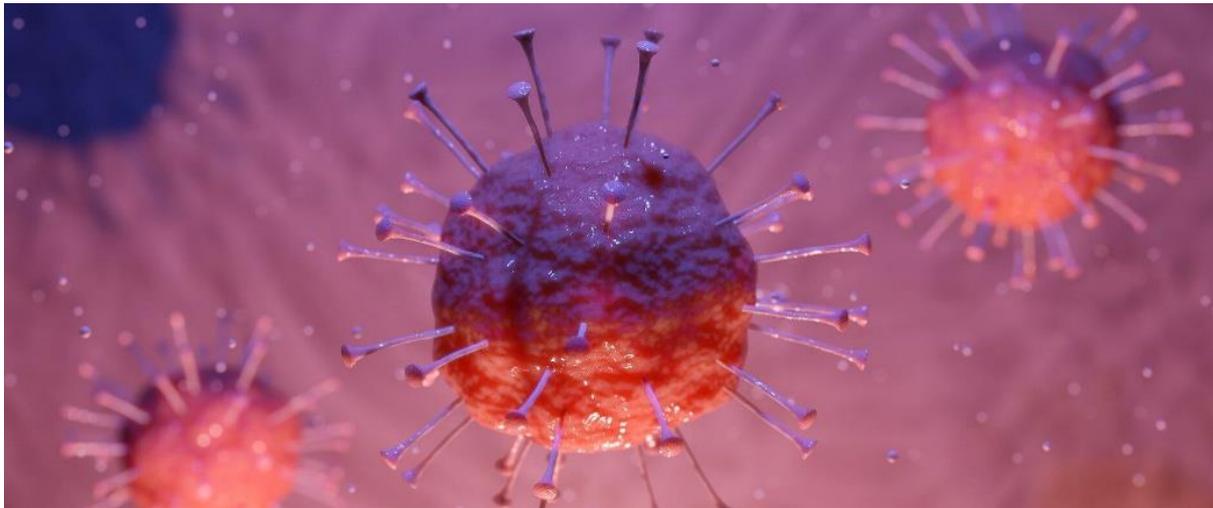




The Centre for Integrative Sports Nutrition

HUMAN IMMUNITY & COVID-19 POSITION STATEMENT

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The Centre for Integrative Sports Nutrition (CISN) is a professional practitioner-driven body, made up of many specialised professions, including sports nutrition, functional medicine, nutritional therapy, exercise physiology and strength & conditioning.

Collectively, these practitioners have decades of experience of coaching and caring for the health of people; from elite and recreational athletes through to the general population. The CISN team are not virology experts, but they do have extensive knowledge and experience of general health-based immunity and how the immune system responds to lifestyle factors, such as nutrition, exercise, stress patterns, and sleep sufficiency.

COVID-19

Thousands of newspaper column inches and hours of discussion of the COVID-19 pandemic have dominated our media output over the past few months. However, an insignificant amount of information has focused on how our bodies are able to fight invading viruses, bacteria, and other microorganisms, and the actions that we can take to enhance this ability.

The following information may therefore prove useful to both athletes and non-athletes. The bullet points omit much detail; we would be delighted to comment

further with as much information as required, so we encourage discussion within our [Facebook page](#).

Positive lifestyle actions

- **Sleep more** – aim for at least 7 to 8 hours per night.
- **Stress less** – this is much easier said than done in the present circumstances, but many protocols exist to mitigate stress.
- **Eat anti-inflammatory foods** - minimise sugary, processed, pre-packaged foods wherever possible and concentrate on fresh produce – vegetables, fruit, meats, fish, nuts and seeds, beans, pulses etc.
- **Move more** – some exercise is vital; equipment is not a pre-requisite. Be aware, however, that excessive levels of exercise are known to deplete the immune response.
- **Gut health** – simply by adopting healthy eating habits, you will start to address this vital area.
- **Intermittent fasting** – the urge is to constantly snack when at home and/or bored. Protocols such as the 14:10 approach may be very worthwhile in allowing the body to replenish itself and fight infections.
- **Stay hydrated** – plenty of non-alcoholic, non-sugary drinks, and try to limit caffeine.
- **Don't totally isolate** – use social media, Zoom, Skype, and even the good old-fashioned phone to stay in touch - this is particularly important for the elderly.
- **Hygiene measures** - the governments have already issued specific guidelines for hand washing etc.

Immune-supportive nutrients

These nutrients, obtained from foods or supplements, are proven to provide the backbone of a healthy immune system:

- Vitamin C
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin E
- Beta-glucans from certain mushrooms
- Herbs and spices such as garlic, turmeric, echinacea, andrographis, and cat's claw
- Minerals such as zinc and selenium

Details of preferred food sources are available on [request](#).

“The elephant in the room” – general population health

The underlying health of a population will have a profound effect on its ability to resist disease and fight the consequences if infection occurs. “The elephant in the room” with regard to the health of the UK population (and most other countries) is that we have millions of people with conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, glucose dysregulation and other lifestyle-related metabolic diseases, that

immediately place sufferers at risk. These are all lifestyle 'dis-eases' that can be assisted by most of the immune-supportive steps outlined above.

The current phase of lockdown is a perfect time for introspection and for all of us to begin to make lifestyle changes that benefit our health.

Athletes specifically

Many elite athletes, and recreational athletes who have many responsibilities in their lives, run a continuous fine line between optimum fitness and immunosuppression, particularly when preparing for competition. This is also a great time for introspection by athletes, many of whom would also benefit from healthier nutrition, sleep, exercise, and stress patterns in their lives.

For a more detailed article on immune health in athletes, [click here](#).