

# MERRITT

Wellness

Committed to the Health of our Family

September 2013

## Immunity Boosters: Protect Your Body From Illness

Consider the immune system your “front line” in the battle against disease and illness. A network of tissues, organs and cells, the immune system fights to protect the body from attacks by foreign invaders that can cause illness and infection. These invaders include: bacteria, parasites, fungi and viruses. It is the immune system’s job to keep these invaders out. If you aren’t caring for your “front line” by keeping it strong and healthy, you will likely lose the battle for health.

There are various ways to strengthen your immune system, vitamins and supplements, to name a few. And then there is what we consider: “common-sense immunity boosters” —lifestyle habits that can keep your immune system strong and your body healthy.

Cooper Clinic Preventive Medicine Physician Emily Hebert explains five healthy habits and lifestyle immunity boosters to help you fight foreign invaders and stay healthy.

### Immunity Boosters

**Sleep.** Without proper rest it is impossible for your immune system to keep you healthy. If you aren’t getting seven to eight hours of sleep every night, your stress hormones go up and your body becomes more susceptible to viruses and infections.

**Exercise.** Regular exercise is an important part of taking care of yourself; it is also an essential component in fighting illness. People who exercise regularly tend to get sick (with flu, cold and other viruses) less often.

**Eat right.** Your diet should be comprised of lots of fruits and vegetables with antioxidants to help boost your immunity. Antioxidants prevent oxidation—a negative process that harms or destroys the cells and molecules in the body resulting in illness. Oxidation is a natural

process but can be accelerated when stress is high and you aren’t taking care of yourself. You also need to be sure you eat enough. Not eating enough can also increase your risk of illness.

**Manage emotional stress.** Emotional stress is a fact of life, but when it’s not managed it can lower your immune system and make you more likely to get ill. People with high stress levels or who suffer from depression are more susceptible to illness in general.

**Use supplements with caution.** Supplements in moderation can be healthy. No supplement can prevent you from getting sick. If you are taking care of yourself, eating well, exercising, sleeping enough, trying to manage emotional stress and you are still getting sick regularly, that is a cue to go see your doctor.

**Zinc and vitamin C** are the two most important supplements, but must be taken with caution. An overdose of zinc can cause neurological problems. An overdose of vitamin C won’t necessarily hurt you, but your body also won’t hold onto too much vitamin C and will give you no extra benefit. It’s also important to make sure supplements won’t interfere with other medications in any way.

Living a healthy lifestyle is the first step in preventing illness. If you are doing everything right (sleeping, eating, and exercising) and you still get sick consistently, make an appointment with your physician. There are other things you can do to prevent illness that have nothing to do with lifestyle—such as wiping down your cart at the grocery store and washing your hands. These simple tips can go a long way to defend your front line so that you can take on and accomplish the everyday victories in your life.

*Article provided by Cooper Clinic Nutrition Services.*

## Join the Merritt Team Today for these Upcoming Walks or Rides! See Meg to Sign Up



**2013 Greater Baltimore Walk to End Alzheimer's**  
Saturday, October 12, 2013 | Walk Starts 10:30 a.m.  
Oregon Ridge Park ~ Baltimore, MD 21030  
Registration: 9:00 AM.  
Pre-Walk Ceremony 10:00 AM.



**2013 Greater Baltimore Heart Walk**  
Saturday, October 19  
Camden Yards Sports Complex, Baltimore, MD



**Making Strides of Baltimore, MD**  
Sunday, October 27, 2013 ~ 9:00 AM  
Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Y at Stadium Place  
900 E 33rd St, Baltimore



The **Komen Maryland Hunt Valley Race for the Cure** will be on Sunday, October 20, 2013.



Register now for the CF Cycle for Life on October 20 at beautiful Herrington Harbour South in North Beach, Maryland. Choice from three routes (20 miles, 40 miles or 60 miles) through the most scenic landscapes in Maryland.



### Be on the look out for upcoming new programs & challenges!

As we get closer to our fall biometric screening look for upcoming Quick Fire challenges as well as additional educational seminars. Plans are in the works now and details will follow shortly either in an Merritt Wellness email or next month's newsletter.

Also, start putting your thinking cap on as in the fall /winter we will be holding a Create Next Year's Challenges contest where we want YOU to submit your best idea for a wellness challenge which will then be voted on by the group.

Please feel free to contact any of the committee members for additional information or share any ideas you may have for upcoming events, newsletter articles, contests, questions, seminars, & more.

Committee Members: Tracy Funk, Ken Jonmaire, Holly Moyer, Meg Truchon, Pam White

**Send all ideas to : [MerrittWellness@merrittproperties.com](mailto:MerrittWellness@merrittproperties.com)**

**Reminder:** Additional helpful articles can be found by logging onto [BHSONline.com](http://BHSONline.com) using User Name Merritt.