

This is a compilation of advice from reputable sources, including my own health care practitioner.

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Get plenty of sleep, and adequate exercise. Reduce stress and overwork. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables high in vitamin C (citrus, kiwifruit, berries, pineapple, broccoli, spinach, silverbeet, capsicum, tomatoes), and garlic, and seafood (especially shellfish) for vitamin A and zinc. Reduce high-sugar foods as these depress our immune function. If you take supplements (eg, vitamin C, vitamin D and zinc), high quality brands include Blackmores and Ethical Nutrients. (Despite our sunny location, many people are deficient in vitamin D, which is important for our immune system.) Probiotics (acidophillus etc) are important to balance our gut flora and in turn improve immune function. Talk to your local health shop or Naturopath about herbs like Echinacea, Andrographis and Astragalus, plus medicinal mushroom extracts (all potentially immune boosting). They will also stock good quality multivitamins for children, if your kids won't eat well. There are many great homeopathic remedies to help boost your immune system and also reduce symptoms if you get sick. Seek the advice of a homeopath or naturopath, many of whom are now offering telephone or video consultations.

Avoid watching the seemingly endless coronavirus reports on commercial TV. It increases anxiety, which damages our immune system and our mental health. (Some people have been contacting Channels 7 and 9 to ask for a return to more normal programming!) Practice deep breathing to relax. Look for humour and beauty in the world around you, and share it with your loved ones. If you live alone, arrange regular phone calls or emails so you don't feel isolated.

If you have a Seniors Card or another concession card, you can order groceries online and have them delivered to your door with Woolworths Priority Assistance. I set up an online ordering account (and linked my Woolworths Rewards card) at <https://www.woolworths.com.au/shop/discover/priorityassistance>. If the Web page says 'delivery is not available in your area', ignore it and continue with your application. When it's approved you'll get a text message to mobile. If it doesn't arrive within 48 hours (mine only took 3 hours), submit the online form again. You won't see delivery time options until your application is approved.

There's a lot we can do to be safer. Please remind all your friends and family that to protect themselves and their loved ones, they need to take these actions now – and stay at home!