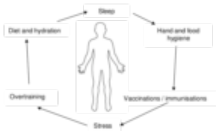


## What can I do everyday to reduce my chances of getting sick?

There are a number of factors that can have an impact on your immune function (see diagram below). If your immune system is compromised this can lead to an increased risk of infection and potentially time out of training.



Alongside good hand and food hygiene, adequate nutrition is essential to maintain the body's natural defences and swimmers should aim to stick to the following guidelines in order to maximise their immune health.

- **Eat enough food to meet the high energy demands of your training** – an inadequate intake can depress the immune system.
- **Include a variety of different foods in your diet to help avoid nutrient deficiencies** – a restricted intake can result in decreases in immune defences against invading pathogens.
- **Eat plenty of carbohydrates throughout the day** – carbohydrates can help to reduce the stress hormone response to intensive training, it also supplies glucose to fuel the immune system.
- **Stay hydrated** – saliva contains several proteins with antimicrobial properties. Sip on water regularly throughout the day to keep the mouth and throat moist.
- **Take a daily probiotic** if you are prone to illness, during heavy training periods or if you are travelling (take 10 days out) – these 'friendly' bacteria can improve immune function and reduce the risk of gastrointestinal infections.