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Attention News/Health/Food & Lifestyle Editors:

Nutrient-rich citrus boosts immune system to ward off cold and flu

TORONTO, ON – (Oct. 13, 2009) – Building up your body's defences against the cold and flu is more important than ever this fall. Six months of the year, many Canadians suffer from the influenza virus and according to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), "10 to 25 per cent of Canadians are affected annually." The cold and flu season is coming and as you take the proper precautions, don't forget about one of the most simple and natural ways to ward off the bug – eating a well-balanced diet that contains vital nutrients to help boost your body's immune system. After all, it's a strong immune system that will naturally help you stave off the cold and flu viruses this season.

"When viruses attack, your body's automatic response is to send out specialized white blood cells to fight off the invading germs. When saturated with Vitamin C, those white cells are able to attack with greater speed and mobility," says Lydia Knorr, MHSc, a Registered Dietitian with the Florida Department of Citrus. "You can energize healthy blood cells by increasing vitamin C in your diet, found in a variety of sources such as Florida grapefruit or the classic glass of 100 per cent pure Florida orange juice."

Power your body to help fight infection and lessen the severity and length of viruses' by making conscious food choices. Here are three flu-fighting food components to keep in mind that will help you maintain a strong body and flu-free winter.

Stifle the sniffles with vitamin C

A healthy diet rich in fruit and vegetables can help prepare your body for the season by strengthening your immune system. According to Health Canada, eating at least one fruit or vegetable at every meal and as a snack will help you get the amount of fruit and vegetables you need each day.

Vitamin C is one of the most powerful antioxidants and can be found in many fruits and vegetables. It neutralizes free radicals and helps fight conditions that can lead to poor health. *Health Canada* recommends between 75 and 90 mg of vitamin C each day for an average adult. You can ensure that your body receives 100 per cent of the recommended daily vitamin C intake by drinking just one eight-ounce serving of 100 per cent pure Florida orange juice or two servings of Florida grapefruit, which is one grapefruit per day.

Remember, Florida citrus fruit and juices aren't limited to being served at breakfast or in a glass. There are many ways to enjoy their sweet and tangy taste in appetizers, desserts and entrées with chicken, pork or other vegetables.

Steam some beta-carotene

Foods rich in beta-carotene such as citrus fruit, carrots and sweet potatoes can help boost your immune system. Beta-carotene also serves as a source of vitamin A in a diet. To receive the maximum nutrients from beta-carotene-rich foods, consume citrus fruit or vegetables, such as carrots and sweet potatoes, raw or slightly steamed.

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Go mega on omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids boost immunity by stimulating the body to produce infection-fighting substances. Fish high in omega-3 fatty acid include salmon, anchovies and mackerel.

Canada's Food Guide recommends eating at least two servings of fish each week to satisfy a body's nutritional needs.

Interested in a delicious recipe that has all three flu-fighting components? Try our Salmon with Florida Grapefruit and French Green Bean Salad – a fulfilling dinner that takes less than an hour to prepare and is high in vitamin C.

Salmon with Florida Grapefruit and French Green Bean Salad

2 Florida grapefruit
¼ cup cilantro
2 limes
4 (5oz.) portions of fresh salmon fillets
2 tablespoons natural cane sugar
1 ½ cup French green beans
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup dried cranberries
½ cup cooked brown rice
Non-stick spray

Prep time: 30 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Peel and segment grapefruit. Reserve 8 slices and roughly chop the remaining fruit. Finely slice the cilantro. Zest and juice the limes. Set aside.

Place salmon fillets skin side down onto a baking sheet coated with non-stick spray or lined with non-stick aluminum foil and place under a hot broiler. Cook for 5 to 6 minutes or until desired doneness. Remove and lay two slices of grapefruit on top of each of the fillets. Evenly sprinkle the cane sugar over the grapefruit on top of the salmon portions and place back under the broiler to caramelize the cane sugar. Watch closely as this happens quickly.

In a large bowl, toss the green beans with olive oil, zest and juice of the limes, chopped grapefruit, sliced cilantro, cranberries and prepared brown rice. Evenly portion and arrange mixture in the center of four dinner plates. Place salmon fillets on top of green bean salad mixture and serve.

For more healthy citrus recipe ideas and information about Florida grapefruit, grapefruit juice and orange juice, visit www.floridacitrus.ca.

About the Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC)

The Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC) is an executive agency of the Florida government charged with the marketing, research and regulation of the Florida citrus industry. Its activities are funded by a tax paid by growers on each box of citrus that moves through commercial channels. The industry employs approximately 76,000 people, provides a \$9.3 billion annual economic impact to the state, and contributes hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenues that help support Florida's schools, roads and health care services.



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