Eat Healthy to Boost Your Immune System

Despite our nation’s ability to produce so much healthful food, fewer than one American adult in five is metabolically healthy, Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, dean of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, had told me the week before. He cited a recent national report describing poor diet as “now the leading cause of poor health in the U.S.” and the cause of more than half a million deaths per year.

Dr. Mozaffarian explained that poor metabolic health was the immunity-impairing factor underlying cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and obesity-related cancers that left so many nutritionally compromised Americans especially vulnerable to the lethal coronavirus now all but paralyzing the country.

“Only 12 percent of Americans are without high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or pre-diabetes,” he said in an interview last week. “The statistics are horrifying, but unlike Covid they happened gradually enough that people just shrugged their shoulders. However, beyond age, these are the biggest risk factors for illness and death from Covid-19.”

The characteristics of what doctors call the metabolic syndrome — excess fat around the middle, hypertension, high blood sugar, high triglycerides and a poor cholesterol profile — suppress the immune system and increase the risk of infections, pneumonia and cancers. They’re all associated with low-grade, body-wide inflammation, Dr. Mozaffarian explained, “and Covid kills by causing an overwhelming inflammatory response that disables the body’s ability to fight off pathogens.”

Alas, the metabolic well-being of many Americans is now further endangered by currently advised limits on shopping trips, an increased reliance on canned and packaged foods high in fat, sugar and salt, and emotional distress that prompts some people to turn to nutritionally questionable “comfort foods.”

Click here to read the full article: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/well/eat/coronavirus-diet-metabolic-health.html?searchResultPosition=1