

# BACK TO FULL STRENGTH



**Bonitas**  
Medical Aid for South Africa

Recovering from respiratory illnesses like the flu, COVID-19, or tuberculosis(TB) can be a short journey for some and a more prolonged process for others. Whether you’re back on your feet or still in recovery mode, what you eat and drink during this time plays a crucial role in restoring your health.

While medicine prescribed by your healthcare provider remains essential, pairing it with nutrient-rich foods can speed up your recovery, boost your immune system, and help you regain your energy. Supporting your body with the right nutrients helps it repair, regenerate, and resist further infection.

## Types of foods and drinks to consume when recovering from flu, Covid-19 or TB:

### Vitamin C-rich citrus fruits

One medium orange can provide most of your daily vitamin C needs, helping your body fight off infection and reduce inflammation. Starting your morning with a glass of fresh juice or tossing orange slices into a salad is a simple way to boost your intake.



### Leafy greens

Spinach reduces inflammation and helps restore energy levels. Toss a handful into your smoothie, scramble it into eggs, or stir into soups for an easy nutrient boost.



### Garlic

Known for its antiviral and antimicrobial properties, garlic contains allicin, a compound that helps white blood cells attack viruses. Crushed garlic works well in soups, stir-fries, or even in tea with honey and lemon.



### Whole grains

Brown rice, oats, and whole-wheat bread or pasta provide fibre, B-vitamins, and zinc. These nutrients help regulate digestion and fight inflammation. Swapping out refined carbs for whole grains can make meals more nourishing and supportive of your recovery. They are full of plant-based protein and vitamin C.

### Ginger

Its anti-inflammatory compounds, especially gingerols, help ease sore throats, reduce nausea, and support your immune system. A warm cup of ginger tea with lemon and honey can offer triple the benefit in one soothing drink.



### Low-fat dairy options

Milk, yogurt, and cheese offer protein and are often fortified with vitamin D, an important nutrient for immune function. Yogurt also brings probiotics to the table, which help restore gut health after a bout of illness.



### Red bell peppers

Often overlooked, they actually contain more vitamin C than oranges. They’re also packed with antioxidants, which speed up recovery. Just half a cup of raw red pepper delivers more than your daily requirement. Enjoy them fresh with hummus or blended into smoothies.



### Lean meats

Chicken, turkey, beef, and pork are rich in protein and zinc, which help your body repair tissues and fight off further infections. Cuts like pork loin and beef patties are especially high in zinc. Preparing them by grilling or roasting keeps things light and healthy.

### Nuts and seeds

Almonds, cashews, peanuts, and chia are packed with protein and healthy fats. These nutrients help rebuild muscle and tissue that may have weakened during illness. Chia seeds add omega-3s and fibre to the mix, promoting overall wellness. A sprinkle on yogurt or oats is all you need.



### Drinks

Don’t overlook hydration. Water plays a vital role in flushing out toxins, regulating temperature, and thinning mucus. Herbal teas, broths, and natural juices can also help you stay hydrated and support your recovery.



There’s no miracle cure for respiratory illnesses, but by choosing nutrient-rich foods and staying well hydrated, you give your body the tools it needs to heal. Rest, medication, and the right nutrition form a powerful trio on the road back to full strength. Always consult with your doctor or a registered dietitian before making major dietary changes, especially if you’re recovering from TB or COVID-19, where nutritional needs may be more specific. Next time you’re feeling under the weather, remember: food isn’t just fuel, it’s medicine!