Can you boost your immunity against the coronavirus?

The immune system's function is to protect your body against diseases by fighting infection. Your immune system's cells and organs work to find and destroy dangerous pathogens that enter your body.

A "boost" in this process would not be a good thing. This is because your immune system would be overactive, and an overactive immune system can lead to autoimmune disorders. We therefore, want to ensure a normal functioning immune system.

What can you do?

- Eat a balanced and nutritious diet. Fill ½ of your plate with vegetables and fruit, ¼ with protein-rich foods (fish, chicken, beans, eggs etc.) and the other ¼ with whole grains like oats, brown rice, bulgur wheat, barley etc.
- Eat a variety of colourful vegetables and fruit.
- Ensure adequate vitamin D intake. Only a few foods contain vitamin D naturally, therefore a vitamin D supplement is often necessary. This dosage is dependant on gender, age and intake from food.
- If you are not getting the range of vitamins and minerals you need from food, you can take a multivitamin.
- Get probiotics from food (such as a probiotic-filled yogurt of fermented foods) instead of taking a probiotic supplement. If you take a probiotic that acts on the wrong type of cell and suppresses the immune system, it can do more harm than good.
- Be physically active for at least 150 minutes per week or as tolerated.
- Take measures to quit smoking.
- Use strategies to reduce stress.
- Get adequate sleep of about seven to eight hours per night.

Heart Failure Society
of South Africa