

Scientists find new part of our immune system

10th March 2025



Scientists have discovered a previously unknown part of our immune system. They say their discovery could be important in helping our body fight diseases. The researchers are from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. Professor Yifat Merbl

told the BBC that her team's finding "could provide an untapped source of natural antibiotics". The team wrote in the journal "Nature": "These findings pave the way for previously undescribed diagnostic and therapeutic strategies in the fight against infectious diseases." The "new" part of the immune system is from a bodily function that recycles proteins. The scientists say it is capable of producing a multitude of chemicals that can kill bacteria and viruses.

The researchers focused on peptides in their study. These are compounds that consist of two or more amino acids that help to keep our immune system strong. The scientists wrote that peptides could provide "biotechnological applications and therapeutic interventions in infectious diseases and immunocompromised conditions". Peptides help the immune system to create defences against bacteria and help to halt their growth. Professor Merbl said: "We discovered a novel mechanism of immunity that is allowing us to have a defence against bacterial infection." She added: "It's happening throughout our body, in all the cells, and generates a whole new class of potential natural antibiotics."

Sources: [the-independent.com](https://www.independent.co.uk) / [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) / [nature.com](https://www.nature.com)

Writing

We should fight disease instead of fighting each other. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / immune system / diseases / antibiotics / journal / therapeutic strategies / acids / applications / defences / bacteria / growth / mechanism / infection / cells

True / False

- 1) Scientists say a new part of our immune system will not fight disease. T / F
- 2) The new part of our immune system will fight antibiotics. T / F
- 3) The research has been published in a journal called "Nature". T / F
- 4) The new part of the immune system centres around proteins. T / F
- 5) Peptides in our body are formed from amino acids. T / F
- 6) Peptides can help to stop the growth of bacteria. T / F
- 7) A professor will write about the immunity mechanism in a novel. T / F
- 8) A new mechanism of immunity happens throughout our cells. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. discovered | a. stop |
| 2. fight | b. healing |
| 3. pave the way | c. be made up |
| 4. therapeutic | d. combat |
| 5. multitude | e. uses |
| 6. consist | f. new |
| 7. applications | g. found |
| 8. halt | h. possible |
| 9. novel | i. get ready for |
| 10. potential | j. large quantity |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about our immune system?
- b) How strong is your immune system?
- c) How interested are you in scientific discoveries?
- d) What do you think of medicine?
- e) How interested are you in reading scientific magazines?
- f) What do you know about infectious diseases?
- g) What are the differences between bacteria and viruses?
- h) What medical breakthrough would you like to see?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. important in helping our | a. of two or more amino acids |
| 2. provide an untapped source | b. way for |
| 3. pave the | c. of chemicals |
| 4. diagnostic and therapeutic | d. bacterial infection |
| 5. producing a multitude | e. body fight diseases |
| 6. compounds that consist | f. their growth |
| 7. help to keep our immune | g. strategies |
| 8. help to halt | h. in all the cells |
| 9. defence against | i. of natural antibiotics |
| 10. It's happening throughout our body, | j. system strong |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What can you do to boost your immune system?
- How often do you take medicine?
- What biotechnological applications should scientists research?
- What three adjectives best describe this article?
- What do you do to keep infections away?
- How healthy will we be in the future?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- a lveiprousy unknown part
- an untapped source of natural tbicsoianti
- in the ruonalj "Nature"
- uaphtteicre strategies
- a bodily function that recycles rsteopni
- producing a dutemulti of chemicals
- These are nsmcduopo
- biotechnological cplaitiponas
- tsfiecinou diseases
- We discovered a novel mnsceiham
- a defence against rlaeiatcb infection
- aesgteenr a whole new class

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. j
6. c	7. e	8. a	9. f	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Vaccines

You think vaccines are the best way of boosting the immune system. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): exercise, good food or stress management.

Role B – Exercise

You think exercise is the best way of boosting the immune system. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): vaccines, good food or stress management.

Role C – Good Food

You think good food is the best way of boosting the immune system. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): exercise, vaccines or stress management.

Role D – Stress Management

You think stress management is the best way of boosting the immune system. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): exercise, good food or vaccines.

Speaking – Immunity Help

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to help our immunity at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| • Vitamin D | • Sleep and rest |
| • Vaccines | • Staying hydrated |
| • Exercise | • Stress management |
| • Good food | • No smoking |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	T	6	T	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.