



COLD SORE SUPPORT FOODS

Cold sores (caused by the herpes simplex virus, HSV-1) often pop-up during times of stress, immune suppression, or nutrient imbalance. Certain amino acids—especially arginine, glycine, and lysine—can influence how the virus behaves in the body.



Foods to Avoid During an Outbreak

Some amino acids, especially arginine and glycine, give the herpes virus the raw material it needs to replicate. Reducing these during an outbreak may help the body fight the virus more effectively.

These foods are high in **arginine and/or glycine**, which can fuel viral replication and make cold sores more stubborn.

Arginine-Rich Foods

Best to avoid these temporarily during an active cold sore.

Food	Arginine (per serving)
Peanuts (¼ cup)	1.1 g
Almonds (¼ cup)	0.9 g
Pumpkin seeds (¼ cup)	1.8 g
Sesame seeds (1 tbsp)	0.3 g
Sunflower seeds (¼ cup)	1.0 g
Chocolate (40 g bar)	0.4 - 0.6 g
Oats (1 cup cooked)	0.4 g
Brown rice (1 cup cooked)	0.3 g
Tofu (½ cup)	1.0 g

Glycine-Rich Foods

It's best to take a break from collagen powders, gelatin, and fatty animal parts like chicken skin during an outbreak.

Food	Glycine (per serving)
Collagen peptides (1 scoop / ~11 g)	3.3 g
Bone broth (1 cup)	1.0 - 2.5 g
Gelatin (1 tbsp)	1.0 g
Chicken skin (100 g)	1.5 g
Pork skin or cracklings (1 oz)	1.1 g
Peanuts (100 g)	1.6 g
Pumpkin seeds (100 g)	1.2 g



Foods to Eat During an Outbreak

Lysine, on the other hand, blocks arginine and may help suppress viral replication. Getting more of this amino acid from food (and optionally supplements) can support faster recovery.

The following list of foods are high in **lysine**, which competes with arginine and helps block viral replication.

Lysine-Rich Foods

Focus on quality protein, dairy, and select fruits and vegetables.

Food	Lysine (per serving)		
Chicken breast (100 g)	2.7 g	Cod (100 g)	2.1 g
Turkey (100 g)	2.3 g	Tuna (100 g)	2.5 g
Eggs (2 eggs)	1.0 g	Potatoes (1 medium)	0.4 g
Parmesan cheese (1 oz)	0.9 g	Avocado (1 medium)	0.2 g
Greek yogurt ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup)	1.0 g	Mango ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced)	0.1 g

Daily Amino Acid Targets (During Outbreaks)

There's no one-size-fits-all, but these general ranges can help guide food and supplement choices during a cold sore flare-up.

Amino Acid	Suggested Intake	Purpose
Lysine	3,000–4,000 mg/day	Suppresses viral activity. Can be from food + supplements.
Arginine	$\leq 2,000$ mg/day	Limit to starve virus of fuel.
Glycine	$< 1,000$ –1,500 mg/day	Optional limit; lower intake may help reduce viral support.
Ratio Goal	Lysine:Arginine $\geq 2:1$	Helps inhibit viral replication.



Sample Daily Menu (Cold Sore-Friendly)

Meal	Example
Breakfast	2 scrambled eggs, sweet potato hash, plain Greek yogurt with mango
Lunch	Grilled chicken salad with avocado, olive oil, and a side of roasted potatoes
Snack	Hard-boiled egg + apple
Dinner	Baked cod with steamed broccoli and mashed potatoes

Extra Support Tips

- **Lysine supplement:** 1000–3000 mg/day (spread out)
- **Topicals:** Lemon balm, zinc oxide, lysine creams
- **Support immunity:** Vitamin C, vitamin D, and zinc
- **Avoid:** Alcohol, sugar, processed foods, excess stress, and prolonged sun exposure

Every body is different - some people are more sensitive to food triggers than others. Keep track of what works for you, and support your body with rest, real food, and immune-boosting nutrients.