



Preventing Colds & Flu **During Winter Season**



There are no known cures for colds and flu, so cold and flu prevention should be your goal. A proactive approach to warding off colds and flu is apt to make your whole life healthier. The most effective way for preventing the flu is to get the flu shot. It may not be natural, but it works better than anything else. But there are other strategies you can employ as well.

#1 Wash Your Hands

Most cold and flu viruses are spread by direct contact. Someone who has the flu sneezes onto their hand, and then touches the telephone, the keyboard, a kitchen glass. The germs can live for hours, in some cases weeks, only to be picked up by the next person who touches the same object. So wash your hands often. If no sink is available, rub an alcohol-based hand sanitizer onto your hands. That helps break up most of the cold germs.

#2 Don't Cover Your Sneezes and Coughs With Your Hands

Because germs and viruses cling to your bare hands, muffling coughs and sneezes with your hands results in passing along your germs to others. When you feel a sneeze or cough coming, use a tissue, then throw it away immediately. If you don't have a tissue, turn your head away from people near you.

#3 Don't Touch Your Face

Cold and flu viruses enter your body through the eyes, nose, or mouth. Touching their faces is the major way children catch colds, and a key way they pass colds on to their parents.

#4 Drink Plenty of Fluids

Water flushes your system, washing out the poisons as it rehydrates you. A typical, healthy adult needs eight 8-ounce glasses of fluids each day. How can you tell if you're getting enough liquid? If the color of your urine runs close to clear, you're getting enough. If it's deep yellow, you need more fluids.

#5 Take a Sauna

Researchers aren't clear about the exact role saunas play in prevention, but one 1989 German study found that people who steamed twice a week got half as many colds

as those who didn't. One theory: When you take a sauna you inhale air hotter than 80 degrees, a temperature too hot for cold and flu viruses to survive.

#6 Do Aerobic Exercise Regularly

Aerobic exercise speeds up the heart to pump larger quantities of blood; makes you breathe faster to help transfer oxygen from your lungs to your blood; and makes you sweat once your body heats up. These exercises help increase the body's natural virus-killing cells.

#7 Eat Foods Containing Phytochemicals

"Phyto" means plants, and the natural chemicals in plants give the vitamins in food a supercharged boost. So put away the vitamin pill, and eat dark green, red, and yellow vegetables and fruits.

#8 Don't Smoke

Statistics show that heavy smokers get more severe colds and more frequent ones. Even being around smoke profoundly zaps the immune system. Smoke dries out your nasal passages and paralyzes cilia. These are the delicate hairs that line the mucous membranes in your nose and lungs, and with their wavy movements, sweep cold and

flu viruses out of the nasal passages. Experts contend that one cigarette can paralyze cilia for as long as 30 to 40 minutes.

#9 Cut Alcohol Consumption

Heavy alcohol use suppresses the immune system in a variety of ways. Heavier drinkers are more prone to initial infections as well as secondary complications. Alcohol also dehydrates the body -- it actually takes more fluids from your system than it puts in.

#10 Relax

If you can teach yourself to relax, you can activate your immune system on demand. There's evidence that when you put your relaxation skills into action, your interleukins, leaders in the immune system response against cold and flu viruses, increase in the bloodstream. Train yourself to picture an image you find pleasant or calming. Do this 30 minutes a day for several months. Keep in mind, relaxation is a learnable skill, but it is not doing nothing. People who try to relax, but are in fact bored, show no changes in blood chemicals.

-from webmd.com

Flexing your Happiness Muscle

Happy people attract happy people. It's like a chain of dominos, only instead of

knocking you to the ground, happiness lifts you, and everyone around you. The good news is, contrary to prevailing perspectives, happiness need not be a helpless emotion that arrives only when external circumstances are just right. Happiness is like the muscle inside your arm, with a little practice and regular training, you too can be a model for happiness fitness.

- Start the day with a happiness exercise. Create a ritual for yourself to warm up your happiness muscle and ensure that it is ready to work throughout the day.

- Say no to things that drag you down. Let's face facts: we are limited in the amount of time we have. If we devote too much of our precious moments to that which causes us stress, anxiety or exhaustion we greatly limit our chances for moments of bliss. Saying no is difficult and may mean you'll need to do some serious self-examination on your priorities.

- Say yes to everything that gives you energy, that makes you smile, that opens your heart, that fills you with gratitude, that affirms your vision of the ideal existence. Try not to question the practicality of it all. Happiness is not always practical, but it is always enlivening.

- Discuss what's right. Rehashing all that's missing from your life can be an addictive cycle that is certain to keep happiness at bay. Examine your speech patterns and move them toward the positive.

- Wear your blinders. The world is full of negativity and fear. Ignore the bad news and instead search out stories and events that confirm the fact that joy, kindness, compassion, understanding, awareness and spiritual progress are alive and well across the globe.

- Let sadness arise. The secret to happiness does not lie in repressing uncomfortable feelings. Happy people are not happy 100% of the time. Nor do they put on a fake happy face when times are tough.

The secret to happiness lies in knowing that sometimes you feel down, but that those down feelings do not mean the end of you. The truth is, sadness and happiness need not be mutually exclusive. So don't freak out when you feel down. Remember, just as happiness ebbs and flows, so goes sadness. The two can coexist.

- Move your energy when you get stuck in a rut. If you are down and can't seem to find happiness, it's time to do something new. Call a friend. Sign up for an art class. Start a job search. Get a haircut. Change things up physically and your emotions are sure to follow suit.

-from ehow.com