

WHEENK! HEALTH

Some Helpful Tips in Avoiding the FLU

The Common Flu as well as H1N1 has received much press recently and we have accumulated some very simple, but effective tools to help keep you healthy.

1. **Frequent hand-washing.** Wash for 20 seconds in order to affectively kill active viruses and bacteria. Disinfectant sprays and gels are also very affective tools. Wipe down door knobs, desktops, phones and other common areas frequently with disinfectant wipes.
2. **"Hands-off-the-face" approach.** Resist all temptations to touch any part of face unless your hands were recently well washed. Common points of entry of viruses and bacteria are eyes, nose and mouth.
3. **Take your Vitamins:** Boost your natural immunity with foods that are rich in Vitamin C. If you have to supplement with Vitamin C tablets, make sure that it also has Zinc to boost absorption. The other antioxidants (E, Bs) are also important for immune support. Vitamin E in particular has shown to help in the flu season.
4. **Stop Smoking:** Smoking deprives our bodies of oxygen and depletes our immune system.
5. **7-9 hours of sleep each night:** This is the time your body rests and heals each day.
6. **Reduce sugar (including alcohol):** Sugars compromise the immune system for up to 5 hours after ingestion. Reducing any foods that you are sensitive to will also help your immune system while it is under 'flu season pressure'. Consider reducing the most common such as dairy, wheat, corn and nuts during this time.
7. **Go outside:** Germs do not like fresh air and sunshine. We are in a great location to have daily access to the outside as well as year-round fresh fruits and vegetables. Our lymph system, which protects our body against all illness and injury, does not have its own pump, it relies on muscle movement for circulation - any physical activity is helpful and outside is best.
8. **Avoid crowds:** Being indoors in a crowd is the best place to catch the flu. There are definitely sick people in these places. There are also those that are 'worried sick' who crowd them in fear of being ill and delay treatment of those who are truly sick while encouraging the spread of illness.
9. **Get hot:** Get outside and get moving or take a 20-minute hot bath with Epsom salts, use your sauna or Jacuzzi. Getting your body to sweat for 20 minutes each day helps rid the body of toxins through the skin. This is a most efficient process because the skin organ is so large and can flush a lot of toxins much more quickly than having them flow through your system.
10. **Gargle** twice a day with warm salt water (use Listerine if you don't trust salt). Many viruses take 2-3 days after initial infection in the throat and/or nasal cavity to proliferate and show characteristic symptoms. Simple gargling reduces proliferation.
11. **Clean your nostrils** at least once every day with warm salt water or saline solution. Blowing the nose hard once a day and swabbing both nostrils with cotton buds dipped in warm salt water is also effective in bringing down viral population.

Have a plan if you get flu symptoms:

If you have flu symptoms, it is best to call the doctor and ask their advice. Most healthy individuals can stay at home for at least 24 hours and monitor symptoms. Have pain relievers, your favorite liquids, comfort foods and maybe a few good movies and books on hand. Know the warning signs that need immediate action: fever over 103, getting better and then suddenly getting worse.

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