



For Flus and Colds, Prevention is the Best Medicine

With winter knocking on the door, it's time to build your defense for cold and flu season. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, influenza and pneumonia remain America's eighth leading cause of death. Fortunately, you have the power to ward off colds and flus by naturally boosting your immunities.

Start with Healthy Habits

Building a stronger immune system begins with a healthy lifestyle. To stay well, the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) recommends getting seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Insufficient sleep weakens the body's ability to stave off viral infections. Reduce stress which taxes the immune system, making you vulnerable to illness. Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, garlic and onions, and avoid sugar which suppresses immunities. Wash hands thoroughly and often, especially when in public places.

Sanitize the Workplace

Because viruses can live on surfaces for up to 48 hours, illnesses can move through offices (and classrooms!) like wildfire. To minimize sickness, sanitize all shared surfaces such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, copiers, tables, and kitchen appliances like the microwave, coffee pot and refrigerator.

Supplement with Supplements

Whether you opt for a flu shot or not, natural supplements can fortify your immune system for an extra layer of support. The AANP suggests increasing your intake of Vitamin C, Zinc, Vitamin D, and Vitamin A which boost T-cell function. For optimal absorption, choose natural Vitamin C derived from whole fruits and herbs. Camu Camu berry also provides high doses of vitamin C as well as minerals. Botanicals like echinacea and elderberry contain antioxidants that neutralize viruses. Daily saline nasal rinses can also minimize sinus infections.

Exercise Germs Away

Research conducted by the American Council on Exercise shows that moderate daily exercise keeps the immune system in good shape. Exercise helps white blood cells circulate more efficiently to fend off viruses. Studies showed that people who exercise record half as many sick days as those who don't.

Continued on next page

Eat Healthy. Be Happy.

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When All Else Fails

Despite best efforts, a cold or flu might find you this winter. If so, here are some tips to kick sickness to the curb.

- *Get plenty of rest.*
- *Drink steady fluids to stay hydrated and flush germs from your system.*
- *Sip hot herbal and ginger teas with honey and lemon.*
- *Gargle with warm salt water (1 teaspoon per glass) to loosen mucus.*
- *Eat a light diet such as bone broth, veggies, and fruits.*
- *Use a cool mist vaporizer or humidifier for added moisture.*

Many natural food stores like Belue Farms Natural Market also carry herbal products such as Gaia Quick Defense, Oscillococcinum, and Pure Synergy Rapid Rescue which can reduce the duration of flus and colds if taken at the onset of symptoms. With vigilance and the right arsenal, you can fight germs this winter and win the battle.

When to See a Doctor

In most cases, you can ward off illness naturally. However, if flu symptoms like dizziness, nausea, dehydration, shortness of breath, or fever do not respond to treatment, seek medical attention.

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