



Be Pro-Active During Flu Season

EAT RIGHT SLEEP TIGHT: A poor diet and poor sleep both lower your immunity and make you more vulnerable to infections. A balanced diet that emphasizes fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and small amounts of lean protein works best for most people. On the other hand, the amount of sleep needed for a healthy immune system varies from person to person. In general, adults seem to do best on seven to eight hours of sleep a night. Older children and teens need more rest - between 9 and 10 hours every night.

EXERCISE REGULARLY: Regular cardiovascular exercise - walking, biking, aerobics - boosts your immune system. Exercise won't prevent every infection, but if you come down with the flu, you may have less-severe symptoms and recover more quickly than do people who aren't as fit.

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.

LIMIT AIR TRAVEL: Researchers say that the pronounced drop in air travel that occurred in the fall of 2001 slowed the spread of the flu and delayed the start of flu season by several weeks. Ordinarily, new flu strains spread rapidly in November, during the height of the holiday travel season, so you may be able to reduce your risk by limiting air travel during the late fall.

DON'T SMOKE: Statistics show that heavy smokers get more severe colds and the flu. 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.

GET FRESH AIR: A regular dose of fresh air is important, especially in cold weather when central heating dries you out and makes your body more vulnerable to cold and flu viruses. Also, during cold weather more people stay indoors, which means more germs are circulating in crowded, dry rooms.

IMMUNE BOOSTERS: Here are some foods that will make both you and your immune system healthier and stronger, so you can fight off infections!

Yogurt: Probiotics found in yogurt are good bacteria that can fight the bad bacteria in your gastrointestinal (digestive) tract so you stay healthy. Experts recommend eating $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 ml) of yogurt per day.

Beef, oysters, and beans: These foods are excellent sources of zinc. Zinc is one of the best immune system boosters out there. It helps white blood cells and other antibodies reproduce more quickly and it makes them more aggressive, so they are better at fighting off infections.

Carrots contain beta-carotene, which boosts the immune system's production of infection fighting cells. These cells attack and kill off disease-ridden microbes making you less likely to catch the flu.

Garlic has immune-enhancing allium compounds that appear to increase the activity of immune cells that help fight viruses. Try adding fresh garlic to pasta sauce or stir fry to add flavour and immunity power.

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