

Since there are no known cures for colds and flu, prevention must be your goal. The **most effective way to prevent flu is to get the flu shot.** It may not be natural, but it works better than anything else.



**GET A
FLU
SHOT**

People with colds and flu don't always stay home, so a pro-active approach to warding off colds and flu is apt to make your whole life healthier. Assume that every doorknob, faucet handle, telephone, and keyboard is contaminated. **You can't rely on others not to spread germs – you must try to prevent yourself from getting sick.** Here are 12 strategies you can use:

1. WASH YOUR HANDS AND USE HAND SANITIZERS

Most cold and flu viruses are spread by direct contact.

Someone with the flu sneezes into their hand, then touches the phone, the keyboard, a kitchen glass. That germ can live for hours – in some cases weeks – only to be picked up by the next person who touches that object. So wash your hands often. If no sink is available, rub your hands together very hard for a minute or so. The friction helps break up most of



the germs. Also use alcohol-based hand sanitizers such as Germ-X®, Purell®, etc.

2. DON'T COVER YOUR SNEEZES AND COUGHS WITH YOUR BARE HANDS

Because germs and viruses cling to your skin, muffling coughs and sneezes with your bare hands results in passing germs along to others. When you feel a cough or sneeze coming, use a tissue, throw it away immediately, and wash your hands. If you don't have a tissue, do the "Dracula Cough" into your inner elbow.



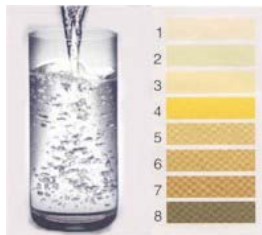
3. DON'T TOUCH YOUR FACE



Cold and flu viruses enter through the eyes, nose, or mouth. Touching their faces is the major way

children catch colds, and a key way they pass them on to their parents and others.

4. DRINK PLENTY OF FLUIDS



Water flushes your system, washing out toxins as it rehydrates you. A typical, healthy adult needs eight 8-ounce glasses of fluids each day. How can you tell if

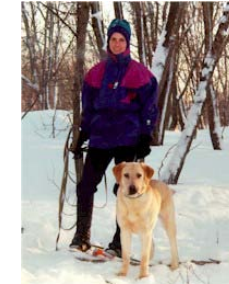
you're getting enough liquids? If the color of your urine is close to clear, you're getting enough. If it's a deep yellow, drink more.

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. 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 viruses. Also, during cold weather more people stay indoors,

which means more germs are circulating in crowded, dry rooms.

7. DO AEROBIC EXERCISE REGULARLY

Aerobic exercise speeds up the heart to pump larger quantities of blood; this makes you breathe faster



to help transfer oxygen from your lungs to your blood, and makes you sweat once your body heats up. This type of exercise helps increase the body's natural virus-killing cells.

8. EAT FOODS CONTAINING PHYTOCHEMICALS



“Phyto” means plant, and the natural chemicals in plants give the vitamins in food a supercharged boost. Natural antioxidants in many fruits and vegetables help keep cells strong. Put away the vitamin pill and eat dark green, red, and yellow vegetables and fruits. “An apple a day” truly does keep the doctor away!

9. EAT YOGURT



Some studies have shown that eating a daily cup of low-fat yogurt can reduce your susceptibility to colds by 25 %.

Researchers think the beneficial bacteria in yogurt may stimulate production of immune system substances that fight disease.

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

11. CUT ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Heavy alcohol use destroys the liver, the body's primary filtering system, which means that germs of all kinds won't leave your body as fast. The result is 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.



12. 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 – 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.



Source: Charles B. Inlander, president of The People's Medical Society, a nonprofit consumer health advocacy organization, and author of 77 Ways to Beat Cold and Flu. From WebMD

The Cold and Flu Survivor's Guide - 12 Tips



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