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10 Tips for Staying Healthy During Cold & Flu Season

1. **Avoid sugar** – sugar has been shown to decrease immune function almost immediately
2. **Get adequate rest** – 8-9 hours sleep per night and rest if you feel tired. Sleep is recovery time for the body's functions, including the immune system. Sleep in a completely dark room, do not eat just before sleeping.
3. **Wash hands thoroughly and frequently** - you should use warm water and soap and rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds to get rid of germs and bacteria. Avoid shaking hands with those already sick. Be especially thorough before eating, in public places, after dealing with money and after riding on public transit.
4. **Eat healthy**, well balanced meals including whole grains, plenty of fruits & vegetables and adequate protein. Don't eat on the run. Take time to enjoy your meals and include plenty of garlic and onions in diet; add shitake mushrooms to soups during the winter; switch from coffee to green tea; add thyme, oregano, rosemary and herbs to your soups & stews. Close to 70% of our immune system actually resides in our gut! Eat a rainbow of vegetables especially leafy greens, & orange vegetables that are high in beta carotene.
5. **Decrease stress levels** – stress also depresses immune function. It has been shown that about 90% of illness and disease is stress related. Acupuncture, massage or other body work is great for decreasing stress levels.
6. **Drink plenty of water** - at least one 8-oz glass of water for every 20 pounds body weight. Water is important for healthy digestion and elimination. All of our cells are constantly bathed in water. When they become dehydrated they can't function properly.
7. **Cultivate positive outlook** - Feeling negative will decrease your immune function, while laughter and feeling positive enhances it.
8. **Exercise regularly** – walking, yoga, stretching, working out at a gym – all of these will help maintain a healthy body, reduce stress and prevent illness.
9. **Bundle up and spend a few minutes outdoors regularly**. Ensure your back and neck are covered properly. When sunlight touches our skin, even when diffused through the clouds, it enables our bodies to make vitamin D which is important for immune function.
10. **Deep breathing** - When you breathe deep it gives your body a break from "fight or flight" mode and tells your nervous system to go into rest and replenish mode. Energetic exercise gets blood flowing to your organs, joints, muscles, bones, everything. This is important because blood brings nutrients, like oxygen, to the cells and it takes cellular wastes away.



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When you begin to feel like a cold/flu is coming on:

1. **First consult your Naturopathic Doctor**
2. **Bathe in a warm bath** and include Epsom salts, Dead Sea salts or essential oils such as thyme or eucalyptus (not for children or infants). Then get to bed early.
3. **Follow the advice from above** – get adequate rest, avoid sugar and drink plenty of liquids
4. **Eat lightly** – broths, congee (overcooked rice), and simple foods
5. **Herbal teas:** lemon balm, ginger, licorice, thyme, elderberry, mint, lemon geranium
6. **Drink** hot water, lemon, fresh crushed garlic and honey (add in some propolis or ginger)
7. **Herbs** to have on hand: Echinacea, Astragalus (not if feverish), Elderberry, Propolis
8. **Vitamin & mineral** supplements: Vitamin A, C, E, selenium and Zinc
9. **Homeopathics:** prevention includes the use of Oscillococcinum or other potentised flu products or Ferrum phos cell salt for early stages of feverish conditions. Sometimes these homeopathic medicines can stop an illness in the early stages.

Following these suggestions may help you stay healthier during the cold & flu season, but they are not meant to replace medical treatment. Use common sense and seek the care of a medical or holistic practitioner if your symptoms are severe or are present for an extended amount of time. Please go to the hospital if there is a high fever, prolonged vomiting and/or diarrhea, or if you have a gut feeling that something is just not right.