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What to do During Cold Season

The best way to keep from getting a cold or the flu is to keep your immune system strong by eating a healthy diet that provides a wide array of vitamins and minerals, exercising and getting the right amount of rest.

Yet, every year in the United States, there are more than 1 billion upper respiratory tract infections and colds. In addition, 5 to 25 percent of Americans get the flu, which results in 200,000 hospitalizations and anywhere from 20,000 to 36,000 deaths, depending on the year, according to Mark Moyad, M.D., MPH, natural health expert and author of *The Supplement Handbook*.



Moyad is the Jenkins/Pokempner director of complementary and alternative medicine at the University of Michigan Medical Center and the consulting director for the Eisenhower Wellness Institute.

Research indicates that some supplements may help improve or maintain immune system function and may help your body deal with the viruses that cause colds and flu.

NUTRIENTS THAT MAY HELP DURING COLD AND FLU SEASON

Vitamin C

Moyad recommends taking 250 to 1,000 milligrams a day of vitamin C for prevention during periods of intense exercise and stress.

According to Moyad, results of 30-plus clinical trials involving more than 11,000 individuals show that taking 1,000 milligrams a day (2,000 milligrams max) of vitamin C lowers the duration of the common cold by up to 20 percent.

Individuals who have an increased risk of temporary immune suppression from stress, intense exercise (which is a type of stress) or extreme environments may experience the most benefit in terms of vitamin C.

Vitamin D

Some evidence has connected wintertime low levels of vitamin D to the seasonal increases in colds and flu. Some smaller studies have also hinted at a link between low vitamin D level and a higher risk of respiratory infections, according to *WebMD*.

In a study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, re-searchers analyzed information on vitamin D levels and respiratory infections from nearly 19,000 adults and adolescents who participated in the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III) from October 1988 to October 1994.

The results showed those with the lowest vitamin D levels (less than 10 nanograms per milliliter of blood) were 36 percent more likely to report having a recent upper respiratory tract infection than those with higher levels (30 ng/mL or higher).

Garlic

Garlic seems to stimulate the immune system, according to *WebMD*. Garlic may also help fight viruses. Also, there is some preliminary evidence that garlic may lower the risk of catching a cold. Garlic works best when consumed raw, either crushed, diced or minced.

Vitamin B6

Vitamin B6 is vital to supporting biochemical reactions in the immune system. Vitamin B6-rich foods include chicken and cold-water fish such as salmon and tuna. Vitamin B6 also is found in green vegetables and in chick peas.

Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant that helps the body fight off infection. Foods rich in vitamin E include nuts, seeds and spinach.

Multivitamins

Research indicates most Americans fail to get the recommended amounts of important nutrients needed daily through diet alone. Multivitamin supplements help provide nutritional support for health-conscious individuals who may not get optimal nutrition from food. A report published in 2016 by the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN) indicates that more than half of Americans take nutritional supplements. According to CRN, multivitamin supplements provide “nutritional insurance” to fill in where nutrition from food alone may not be enough.



The ALTRUM Division



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