

Dr. Ray's Health News

How to beat cold and flu season this year: two part series

Part One: Identifying the difference between cold and flu; rate your viral immunity strength; limiting risk factors for getting sick; how to stay healthy this winter and avoid colds and flu.

Even for a doctor it's not always easy to distinguish between a cold and flu, but let's discuss some of the differences and see if you are at risk for getting sick this year. If you do get sick it is important to identify what you have in order to treat it effectively.

Cold symptoms begin two to three days after infection with a nasal discharge, obstruction of nasal breathing, swelling of the sinus membranes, sneezing, sore throat, cough, headache and a slight fever. This can last from 2-14 days but two-thirds of people infected usually recover in one week.

Flu symptoms are a viral infection of the upper respiratory tract. Compared with other viral respiratory infections like the common cold, the flu virus causes a more serious illness. High fever (adults 100°-103° and higher in children), severe headache, chills, muscle aches and often extreme fatigue distinguish the flu from a cold. Stomach flu is something other than the influenza virus.

Cold versus Flu

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Aches & Pains	mild	common and may be severe
Chest Congestion	mild to moderate	common and severe
Chills	mild or absent	common and may be severe
Cough	hacking	common and may be severe
Exhaustion	never	early and may be severe
Fever	rare	high (101° F and higher)
Headache	rare	prominent
Sneezing	typical	sometimes
Sore throat	common	sometimes
Stuffy nose	common	sometimes
Weakness	mild and short lived	common; lasting 2-3 weeks

Reducing your vulnerability to getting sick in the first place is the first step to staying healthy this winter.

Test your viral immunity with the following quiz: **Score yourself** - each question you answer “yes” to is worth 10 points. 100 points is excellent. 80-90 is very good. 70 is just passing. 50-60 points means you need a viral immunity workout. Less than 50 means your viral immunity is low and you may be highly susceptible to flu or influenza and should get started on a serious plan to enhance your viral immunity.

- I get fewer than two colds or ordinary flu a year.
- I don't have allergies or asthma, and I don't have lung disease.
- I am between the ages of 15 and 50.
- I take antioxidant vitamins (including vitamin C and E) and minerals daily.
- I exercise at least three times a week.
- I eat at least 4-5 servings of fresh fruit and vegetables daily.
- I drink fewer than 2-4 glasses of alcohol each week.
- I don't smoke.
- I get 7-9 hours of sleep each night.
- I don't have a high stress lifestyle.

(Adapted from material found in *Viral Immunity: A 10-Step Plan to Enhance Your Immunity Against Viral Disease Using Natural Medicines*. Hampton Roads, 2002.)

What can you do to prevent colds and flu?

- ❖ 7-9 hours of sleep every night
- ❖ Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables (8-10 servings)
- ❖ Drink plenty of fluids (1/2 your body weight in ounces in water daily)
- ❖ Limit your sugar intake including juices and alcohol-sugar impairs the immune system.
- ❖ Exercise regularly (cardiovascular 2-3x/week and strength train 2-3x/week).
- ❖ Eat regular meals with enough protein
- ❖ Don't smoke
- ❖ Drink alcohol in moderation

Nutritional prevention of taking vitamins and minerals help the immune system to stay strong, and to fight colds and flu.

Supplement	What We Offer
Take a high potency multiple vitamin	Twice Daily Multi-Vitamin
Vitamin D-2000-5000 IU/day depending on age and health, see Dr. Ray to see how much you should be taking.	D Supreme or D Synergy
Vitamin A 5000 IU per day	Liquid Vitamin A –Mulsion by Seroyl
Vitamin C	Stellar C
Vitamin E	Ultra Gamma E
Zinc	Zinc Supreme
High quality fish oil	OmegAvail Hi-Po
Quercetin	Quercetin + Nettles & HistaEze
N-acetyl-cystein	N-Acetyl-Cysteine Capsules

Vitamin A is essential for proper immune function. It helps maintain the tissue that makes up skin and mucous membranes lining the respiratory tract which serve as the first line of defense against viruses by preventing invading viruses from lodging on the surface of the lungs, throat, and nasal passages. Vitamin A is found in liver, fish, eggs, green leafy vegetables and brightly colored fruits and vegetables. 5000 IU is recommended once per day with food.

Vitamin C has been studied extensively for its use in a variety of disease including viral infections. Senior citizens that supplement with a combination of vitamin C and E have especially added protection against influenza even with a flu shot. 500 mg two to four times daily of Vitamin C is recommended.

Vitamin E is protective of oxidative damage in the lungs that can happen from influenza, which can then lead to pneumonia and secondary bacterial infections. The recommended amount of Vitamin E is 1000 IU of mixed tocopherols containing a minimum of 500 mg of d-alpha tocopherol.

A high quality fish oil taken on a regular basis helps decrease the body's inflammatory load in the lungs as well as many other vital organs such as heart and brain. 500-1000 mg EPA/DHA is recommended once per day with food.

Quercetin is a natural antihistamine and also has anti-cancer effects, cardiovascular protective effects, inhibits viruses, and can improve respiratory function. Recommended dose is 250 mg twice daily.

N-acetyl-cysteine is an amino acid or protein and is a powerful antioxidant with affinity for lung tissue. It supports immune function and helps thin mucus, reduces inflammation and helps to detoxify the liver. 500 mg three times daily away from food is recommended.

Zinc helps to fight rhinoviruses, those that cause the common cold. 30 mg per day is recommended.

Garlic is safe to take even for prolonged use. The active ingredient *allicin* is useful in preventing and managing secondary bacterial infections of the upper-respiratory tract. 200 mg twice daily with food is recommended. Garlic is also a wonderful herb to take for cardiovascular health.

These supplements are 10-40% off through the end of October.

Chiropractic adjustments also help stimulate a positive immune system response, helping your body fight against invading organisms. *The proper function of your nervous system, which is a key to good health, is my primary interest. Schedule a visit today and help your body function at its best.*

In our next newsletter I will review what foods, herbs and tea to have daily to keep our immune system in top shape; and, if you should get sick, what foods and supplements to have on hand to treat the pathogen (cold or flu) immediately which will diminish the severity of the episode.

Until next time-enjoy this beautiful season in optimal and vibrant health!

Sources: Beating the Flu The Natural Prescription for Surviving Influenza and Bird Flu by

J.E. Williams, O.M.D. Hampton Roads Publishing Co., Inc.