

5 Important Factors for Staying Healthy This Winter

Winter is too much fun to be side-lined with a cold or flu. Wouldn't you rather be skiing, snowshoeing, fort-making and skating than staying indoors nursing your symptoms?

Following the suggestions listed below will help you have a healthier season... and a quicker recovery when illness does occur!

1. Avoid sugar

Refined sugar has been clinically shown to reduce immune function for up to 4 hours after ingestion. This does not just pertain to candies and sweets, however; bottled, jarred and prepared foods often have sugar in them (eg. salad dressings, mayonnaise, ketchup, pasta sauce, etc.). Sugar will be listed on ingredient labels as 'syrup', 'cane juice' or any word ending with '-ose' (eg. glucose, fructose, dextrose, lactose, etc.).

Prevention: consciously reduce your sugar intake throughout the winter months.

Treatment: at first sign of illness, completely eliminate all refined sugars from your diet, including most cough syrups.

2. Avoid dairy products when you are suffering from a cold or flu.

Dairy products increase the natural production of mucus in your body. This can increase congestion in your sinuses, nose, throat, lungs, urinary tract and intestines, leading to greater discomfort and longer duration of illness.

Dairy includes milk, butter, cheese, yogourt, ice cream, cottage cheese and anything else that originated in the udder of a cow, goat or sheep!

3. Drink water in preference to other beverages.

Your body is ~70% water and requires adequate ingestion for optimal health.

A good way to calculate your water needs in a day is **half your body weight, in ounces**.

Eg. a 160 lb person requires 80 ounces of water each day (=10 cups or 2.5L)

Caffeine (coffee, black tea, hot chocolate) and alcohol are diuretics and increase your need for water.

4. Move your body every day.

Mild to moderate exercise on a daily basis, preferably in the morning, will help support your immune function. Begin with 3x weekly for 20+ minutes; your goal being 45minutes a day, 1 day for each decade of your life. Eg. if you are in your 60s, be active 6 days of the week.

Also, be sure to spend at least 10 minutes outside each day, breathing deeply.

5. Probiotic supplementation

Probiotics, such as Acidophilus and Bifidus, are the friendly bacteria that reside primarily in your digestive tract and are a very important frontline factor in your immune health. These bacteria are negatively impacted by the use antibiotics as well as the chlorine in your water, pesticides on your foods, and inadequate fibre intake.

Taking 1 capsule daily will help prevent infection this winter.

Also of great importance is the consumption of foods abundant in health-promoting nutrients. Did you know that **vegetables and fruits contain a nutrient profile that is not found in any other food group**? If you are 160lb, aim for 600g of vegetables (raw weight) each day.

And perhaps most importantly, pleasure has been shown to positively impact immune function... so have fun out there on the snow this season!

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