



Cold and Flu Prevention

It is estimated that 1 billion colds are caught annually in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 5-20% of the U.S. population catches the flu annually as well. The flu season in the United States typically ranges from November to April. While it is a myth that cold temperatures cause colds, it is true that cold weather keeps people indoors making it more likely for germs to spread. It is unfortunate that sometimes there are shortages of flu vaccines, which makes it all the more important to be proactive and prevent colds and the flu from infecting you.

Here are 10 tips to help you avoid colds and the flu this season:

- Clean and wipe down shared surfaces such as: countertops, doorknobs, keyboards, and phones.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes and be sure to wash hands thoroughly and often.
- Try to avoid people who are already sick and stay home if you become sick.
- Get a flu shot, if possible. (It is most important for the very young and the very old)
- Eat healthy foods to build up your immune system.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Exercise moderately to maintain a healthy immune system.
- Ask your doctor about vitamin supplements to help support your immune system.

The symptoms of colds and flus are relatively similar, including a stuffy nose, sore throat, and cough. However, running noses and sneezing distinguish colds, whereas a high fever, chills, and body & headaches characterize the flu.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>

Tips for Avoiding Colds and Flu. Ascribe Health & Fitness News Service, 9/1/2004, p.7.

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