



# Health Yourself Byte



## Preventing Colds and Flu

Americans will suffer a billion colds this year! If you add flu to that number, it's even higher.

There are things you can do to prevent getting a cold or the flu:

- ✓ Regular exercise is an immune booster. Moderate exercise, such as brisk walking, for 45 minutes per day for 5 days per week can reduce the risk of a cold by one-third.
- ✓ Eat and sleep well for good health. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables that offer antioxidants. Try to get seven to eight hours of sleep per night to boost your immune system.
- ✓ Wash your hands often. Use warm water and a good amount of soap. Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Make sure to clean under nails, between fingers, and wash your wrists.
- ✓ Watch your hands and fingers. Many times in a day we touch our hands to our faces, fingers near our eyes and mouth. That is how the cold virus is introduced into your system. Keep your hands and fingers away from your face, nose and eyes.
- ✓ Practice prevention hygiene and teach your children to do it too. Making sure there are tissues available for coughing and sneezing into. Washing hands after using tissues will reduce the spread of germs and viruses. Instill the habit of washing hands after tissue use to promote good health and hygiene for a lifetime.
- ✓ Get a flu vaccine. It is the best way to prevent the flu. The best time to get the vaccine is from October through November, although you can get the vaccine during flu season. Get the flu vaccine every year; it provides protection against new strains.
- ✓ Clean your home to prevent viruses. Use disinfectant when you clean your home, especially in the kitchen and bathroom. Do not clean using rags and sponges; they are the number-one source of germs in the whole house. If you must use them, change them weekly or soak them in bleach for 15 minutes.
- ✓ Practice cold and flu prevention at work. Try to avoid being in close contact with people who are visibly sick. Use large rooms with plenty of ventilation for meetings. Use antibacterial wipes to clean shared and "high touch" areas such as doorknobs, faucets, microwaves, and coffee stations.



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