

The Natural Pharmacy Newsletter

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In The News

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Ways to Prevent and Treat the Common Cold

There are several steps you can take to help prevent getting the cold. First and foremost, wash your hands often with soap and warm water. This is the number one way to protect yourself and to decrease the spread of the cold virus and other infections. When you feel the need to sneeze or cough, do not sneeze or cough into your hands; instead use a tissue or the nook of your elbow. If you do happen to sneeze or cough directly into your bare hands, wash your hands right away. As you can see, hands are the number one way to spread the cold or other infections. Try not to touch your face with your hands as this could allow the cold virus or other bacteria to enter your body through your mucous membranes in your eyes, nose, or mouth.



Other great ways to prevent getting a colds are to drink plenty of fluids especially water, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and increase your physical activity. Most healthy adults need 8-ounce glasses of water daily. Aerobic exercise increases the amount of blood flow and increases the amount of oxygen pumped throughout your body. When keeping your body healthy, it is important to avoid tobacco and alcohol use. If you do choose to

consume alcohol, this is fine in moderation. It is recommended men consume two drinks or less per day, and women consume one drink or less per day. Tobacco use especially smoking can increase your risk of respiratory infections as it affects the mucosal linings in your nose and lungs.

Taking time out of your day to relax is vital for a healthy life. Being under constant stress takes a toll on your immune system and can make you more susceptible to bacterial and viral infections. Relaxing does not mean doing nothing and being bored; instead find an enjoyable activity that takes you to a calm state of mind. Try doing this for about 30 minutes per day. If you still find yourself with the beginning of cold symptoms, here are some tips to help. Taking Vitamin C and zinc lozenges have been found to be beneficial. The recommended daily amount of Vitamin C in healthy individuals is 90mg for men and 75mg for women. When cold symptoms start, you could take 1000 to 3000mg of Vitamin C daily. Taking high doses of Vitamin C can decrease the duration of your cold by a day or two. Side effects of taking high doses of Vitamin C long term include kidney stones, nausea, and diarrhea. Zinc lozenges can decrease the duration and severity of the cold when started within 24 hours of the first cold symptoms and used every two or three hours until symptoms are gone. Finally, standing in a hot shower

or using a humidifier can help loosen mucous and improve breathing.

Hulisz D. Efficacy of zinc against common cold viruses: an overview. *Journal of The American Pharmacists Association*. 2004; 44:594-603.
Simasek, M, Blandino D. Treatment of the Common Cold. *American Family Physician*. 2007; 75(4):515-520.
Hemila H. The role of vitamin C in the treatment of the common cold. *American Family Physician*. 2007; 76(8):1111,1115. Common Cold. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease. <www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/commoncold/pages/pre_prevent.aasp>

Benefits of Probiotics

Probiotics such as lactobacillus are typically found in the digestive and urinary tracts in healthy individuals. The growth of this good bacteria prevents the growth of harmful bacteria that could lead to infection such as diarrhea caused by the rotavirus in children and traveler's diarrhea.

Often individuals experience diarrhea or yeast infections when taking antibiotics. While the antibiotics are killing the bacteria causing the infection in the body, the antibiotics are also killing off the good bacteria or lactobacillus. Harmful bacteria and yeast not treated by the antibiotic can start to grow causing diarrhea and yeast infections. When taking a probiotic with an antibiotic, you should separate the doses by about two hours. If taken together, the antibiotic could inhibit the benefits of the probiotic.

In addition, probiotics may be beneficial in relieving some of the symptoms of colic in babies. Small doses of lactobacillus have been show to decrease the crying time in infants and may be more beneficial than simethicone. Finally, probiotics may be beneficial in the prevention of clostridium difficile, decreased abdominal pain and bloating associated with irritable bowel syndrome, and prevention of diarrhea associated with chemotherapy treatment.

Several sources of probiotics are available including in fermented dairy products such as yogurt. There are many strains of probiotics are available as supplements. Two of the most common strains are Lactobacillus (bacteria), and the other is Saccharomyces (yeast). Remember these are considered nonpathogenic.

Boyle RJ, Robins-Browne RM, Tang MLK. Probiotic use in clinical practice: what are the risks? *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2006; 83(6):1256-1264. Lactobacillus. National Institute of Health. <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/natural/790.html>>

Benefits from High Dietary Fiber Intake

Dietary fiber has many health benefits; however, in the United States, individuals consume less than 50% of the daily recommended intake of fiber. When adequate amounts of fiber are ingested, fiber can decrease coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and certain GI disorders. Also, increased consumption can improved lipid levels, lower blood pressure, improve blood glucose control in diabetics, promote GI regularity, and aid in weight loss.

Excellent sources of fiber include whole grain foods, vegetables, fruits, legumes and nuts. Daily recommended intake of fiber is dependent on age, gender, and energy intake. It is recommended most adult women consume 28 grams of fiber per day and 36 grams per day for men.

Increasing your dietary fiber is a healthy way to promote weight loss. One study noted patients on a high fiber diet reported decreased hunger and less thoughts of food. The patients in this study also had a decrease in blood pressure, fasting plasma glucose, insulin, total cholesterol, LDL, and triglycerides.

Dietary fiber can have a significant effect on overall heart health. In the US, one-third of the adult population is affected by cardiovascular disease, and coronary artery disease is the leading cause of death. In a study comparing low versus high dietary fiber intake, they found a 29% decreased risk of coronary heart disease for those patients on a high fiber diet.

If you are considering increasing your dietary fiber intake, please do so slowly. Increasing fiber intake too quickly could cause abdominal discomfort and constipation.

Anderson JW, Baird P, Davis RH, Ferreri S, Knudtson M, Koraym A, Waters V, Williams CL. Health benefits of dietary fiber. *Nutrition Reviews*. 2009; 67(4):188-205. Ramos SC, Fonseca FA, Kasma SH, Moreira FT, Helfenstein T, Borges NC, Moreno RA, Rezende VM, Silva FC, Izar MC. The role of soluble fiber intake in patients under highly effective lipid-lowering therapy. *Nutrition Journal*. 2011;10(80).
Morenga LAT, Levers MT, Williams SM, Brown RC, Mann J. Comparison of high protein and high fiber weight-loss diets in women with risk factors for the metabolic syndrome: a randomized trial. *Nutrition Journal*. 2011; 10(40).

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