



10

# Tips for a Flu/Cold Free Winter

**1. Moderate Exercise...Walk, not run.** Intense exercise increases the risk of weakening your immune system. Thirty minutes of mild exercise will give you health benefits without increasing inflammatory compounds and lowering your levels of helpful antibodies.

**2. Breathe Free!** Steer clear of those smokers clustered near the entrance to your workplace, and skip your daily butts if you're usually in those huddled masses. Cigarette smoke paralyzes and eventually kills your cilia-tiny fibers in your nasal passages and respiratory tract-that help repel invading viruses.

**3. Clean your Machines!** Cold viruses can survive for several hours on inanimate surfaces, so always wipe down your desk, phone, pens and computer with an alcohol-based cleaner after they've been used by anyone else. Any alcohol-based product (or just plain old rubbing alcohol) will do just fine. Use your own pen, do not share writing utensils! At home today? Wipe down your counters, faucets and home office- and scrub down the steering wheel and door handles of the family car.

**4. Go Fish!** Forgo fast food for a tasty salmon fillet. Because salmon is so high in omega-3 fatty acids, it strengthens immune-boosting white blood cells and reduces inflammation. That helps to fortify your body against marauding achoo instigators.

**5. Take a Break!** Anything that reduces anxiety is good for reducing stress, and anything that reduces stress is an immune-system booster. Turn your back on your computer and read a few pages of something for pleasure, strike a yoga pose or call the person you love most in the world.

**6. Sanitize!** When you leave work, or exit the grocery store, scrub your hands with an alcohol-based hand cleaner. Everyone is a suspect carrier of germs during cold and flu season, so scrupulously clean your hands every time you touch cash, take public transportation, leave a restroom or sit down to eat. Keep a small bottle of sanitizer in your purse or desk for this purpose.

**7. Fuel Up on Extra Premium.** Have a healthy, balanced dinner, with whole grains and heaps of fresh vegetables, and fresh fruit for dessert. Broccoli sprouts are an especially good choice to add to your salad: Researchers at Johns Hopkins found that they contain up to 50 times the levels of health-helpful phytochemicals as are found in "adult" broccoli.

**8. Hit the Hay Early.** For at least eight hours of zzz's! Getting inadequate rest lowers the level of helpful guardian molecules (which keep invading bugs at bay) in your immune system.

**9. Get your Flu Shot!** 35,000 people die each year from influenza, and 225,000 people are hospitalized. Chronic illnesses like diabetes, heart conditions, immune system problems and age (over 65 or under 5) are the biggest risk factors. That means EVERYONE you come in contact with can be at risk if YOU do not get immunized!

**10. Share these Tips!** Save that hard earned time off for vacation or a day when the kids are off school to play in the snow! More companies are allowing employees to use their unused sick days as extra vacation or Paid Time off! Feel free to have a day to lay around and snuggle up in your favorite "sick quilt", you just won't be sick!