

How to Survive This Years' Cold and Flu Season!

The flu season is hitting hard and fast this year. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention is saying that it could be the start of the worst flu season in a decade. Here is some information to help you get through cold and flu season:

How to tell the difference between a cold and the flu?

The common cold typically begins with a sore throat, which can make swallowing and talking difficult. This usually lasts for a couple days and is often joined by runny nose and chest congestion. Overall, these symptoms should only last somewhere between a few days and a week.

The flu, however, proceeds in a different way. For one, all of the symptoms above are more severe and they're joined by other issues—including fever, headache, muscle aches, and soreness. Importantly, the flu is often marked by vomiting and diarrhea, which are rare with the common cold. The flu can last for more than a week and often leads to complications, including bronchitis and pneumonia. Those most “at risk” of complications from the flu virus include those younger than five years old, anyone over 64, pregnant women, and patients with weakened immune systems.

What to do if you have the symptoms of the flu?

If you come down with the flu and are not in the “at risk” group, stay home, rest and drink lots of fluids. Don't venture outside until you've been without a fever for 24 hours without medicine. If your symptoms worsen or you are concerned, call your provider or use a virtual office visit.

Feed a cold - starve a fever. However, the healing power of nourishment and energy through foods is vital when you're battling an intestinal virus or common cold. In order to boost your immunity and give your body the energy it needs to fight off whatever illness is ailing you, these foods are gentle on your body and will help you to heal faster: chicken soup, dry toast, ginger (in the form of ginger tea or ginger ale), bananas, popsicles (100% all real fruit juice), vegetable juice and green or black tea.

Taking care of yourself during cold and flu season:

It's not too late to get a flu shot. Flu season runs from October to May – with most cases happening from December to March – so getting a flu shot now is still recommended. **[Click here](#)** to read more about where to get a flu shot along with other preventive measures to practice at home and at work to avoid the flu.

Taking care of yourself and your pocketbook!

Consumer spending on healthcare is on the rise and taking the time to educate ourselves on ways to reduce out-of-pocket costs is an investment in you and your pocketbook. Just like taking the time to comparison shop when buying a large purchase such as a car or washing machine, it's equally important to make informed healthcare related purchases. **[Click here](#)** to read about 5 steps you can take now to improve your health and fatten up your wallet at the same time!

Here's to a healthy new year!

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