

Who Has Time to Get Sick? Winter Immune Boosters:

The Colorado Clinic for Environmental Medicine

In the winter many get sick every year. Some people just take this for granted as part of their annual winter ritual. Few realize that this doesn't have to be. The fact is, healthy people rarely get sick, and when they do, they recover rapidly. Take the following steps to eliminate or minimize your sick days this year:

1. Clean Up Your Diet. Eating sugar or simple carbohydrates rapidly converted to sugar depresses your immune system for several hours. Carb addicts go from one sugar fix to the next and their immune system is depressed most all the time. Cut out the processed carbs. Whole grains plus fresh fruit is great. Sugar and simple carbs are an invitation to get (or stay) sick.

2. Get 8 Hours of Sleep per Night. Winter is a natural time for your body to rest. Until the last century winter was a time of going to bed early and getting up late. Respect this tradition and get your rest. Lack of sleep is a major contributing cause to illness.

3. Vitamin C. Take 1000 to 2000 mg per Vitamin C per day. Whatever dose you take, try and keep it constant. Vitamin C does strengthen your immune system, but dropping your regular daily intake of vitamin C will weaken your immune system and set you up for illness. If you feel you are getting ill and take a higher dose of vitamin C for a few days, great. But don't just stop it- gradually taper the dose down over several days to keep your immune system strong.

4. Vitamin D. There is now a mountain of evidence that society is suffering from low vitamin D levels. I recommend getting your blood level checked and finding a dose of vitamin D that will get your blood level to 80. At this time we do not recommend getting a level above 100 (although some vitamin D experts are stating we would be healthier with even higher levels). Take at least 2,000 IU of vitamin D per day. I think taking 5,000 IU is even better. If you have taken 5,000 IU per day I would check your blood level after 3 months or so to see what your blood level is. If you have not taken vitamin D before I would take 25,000 IU the first two days.

5. Vitamin A. Often overlooked, vitamin A is critical to your immune system's ability to fight viruses. Viruses actually hijack your body's production of vitamin A as part of their ability to make you sick. Vitamin A levels in multivitamins are generally low due to fear of pregnant women taking too much vitamin A. If you aren't pregnant, I recommend you take 10,000- 25,000 IU of vitamin A (as vitamin A, not beta carotene) all winter, with an extra 25,000 IU of vitamin A if you feel you may be getting sick. This recommendation does not include if you are or may become pregnant- consult your health care provider about vitamin A during pregnancy.

6. Nordic Naturals Cod Liver Oil. In the winter I recommend getting some of your Omega 3s from cod liver oil. This is a natural source of omega 3s + vitamin D + vitamin A. Available as liquid (lemon or strawberry flavored) or capsules. Some would argue if you are taking vitamins A & D anyway, you don't need the cod liver oil. I disagree. Cod liver is a whole food, designed by God. In case after case science has found that whole foods contains more "good stuff" than originally realized. Millions of grandmothers can't be wrong. Take your cod liver oil in the winter. Be sure your brand has *every* batch independently certified as mercury free.

7. Zinc Picolinate. (Pure Encapsulations: \$22.60 for 180 capsules). Zinc is critical for your immune response, and many are low in it. Take 1 per day through the winter, 2 if you feel you are getting sick.

8. Klaire Labs "Ther-Biotic Complete" Probiotics. 2/3s of your immune system is in your gut. If you want a strong immune system, heal your gut. Studies showing an immune system boost with the routine use of probi-



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otics are now too numerous to count. We recommend everyone take a probiotic daily. 1/2 tsp of the powder or 1 capsule once or twice a day.

9. ViraClear EPs 7630. \$18.00 ViraClear is a homeopathic remedy for upper respiratory infections and bronchitis that has been widely used in Europe for over 10 years. It has been the subject of over 20 large well designed studies. These studies have shown that adults on VC return to work 2 days sooner on average, and 3x as many are symptom free by day 7. Regular for adults, cherry flavored for kids. I recommend you keep this in your medicine cabinet as “first aid” for a cold.

10. Oscilloccinum. \$13.00. A well known homeopathic for flu like symptoms. Best started as soon as you feel flu like symptoms coming on. A staple in our medicine cabinet for many years.

11. Immunitone Plus. Designs for Health \$42.00. Combination of immune boosting herbs, mushroom extracts and Beta 1,3 glycan. Manufacture’s Description: This powerful immune supportive formula combines herbs that have antiviral and antibacterial abilities as well as the ability to maintain Natural Killer (NK) cell activity and cytokine synthesis. Safe enough to use for chronic viral conditions, and in cases of a weak immune system system and acute illness. Not recommended for pregnant or lactating women.

12. ImmunotiX 3-6. Xymogen \$83.95. A patented, potent immune booster. Manufacturers description: High quality, pure, patented GRAS ingredient containing an insoluble, complex carbohydrate purified from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (Baker’s yeast) known as beta 1,3/1,6 gluco polysaccharide. Numerous animal and human studies have demonstrated safety and shown efficacy as an immune modulator. When taken orally ImmunotiX 3-6™ interacts with key immune cells to initiate a cascade of immune activity designed to protect the body against foreign challenges. Among immune-enhancing polysaccharides, research shows that yeast gluco polysaccharide is superior to mushroom and barley beta glucans. The variance is attributed to differences in the polysaccharides’ molecular structure and forms that result in lower concentrations of beta 1,3/1,6 gluco polysaccharide, the bioactive component in grain and mushroom products when compared with yeast. A study comparing the percent of beta 1,3/1,6 glucopolysachharide in leading mushroom beta glucan products compared with this yeast-derived gluco polysaccharides showed four to five times as much gluco polysaccharide in the yeast-derived formula versus the mushroom-derived product extract. Although mushroom-based products have demonstrated immune-enhancing benefits, they are more difficult to process and purify, resulting in batch inconsistency and lower levels of beta 1,3/1,6 beta glucan. Not recommended for pregnant or lactating women.

13. Flu Shots. I recommend flu shots be obtained by anyone who is (1) at high risk for complications from the flu who (2) has a reasonable chance of mounting an adequate immune response from the flu shot when (3) the flu shot has been shown to be appropriate for the strain of flu spreading that year and (4) when the flu shot “brand” is free of mercury and aluminum. These criteria are almost never met, so I do not recommend the routine use of flu shots.