

# Stay Healthy During Cold and Flu Season

## Preventing Colds, Illnesses, and the Flu This Winter

By [Jennifer Wolf](#), About.com Guide

### Applying These Tips Will Help You Stay Healthy:

- 1. Eat Well**  
For your best shot at staying healthy this winter, make sure you get at least three servings of vegetables each day, and two servings of fresh fruit. In addition, opt for whole grains when you can, and make sure you're taking in at least two servings of milk or yogurt each day.
- 2. Wash Your Hands**  
Wash your hands with hot, soapy water every time you use the bathroom and before every meal. To be sure you're really washing away the potential viruses and bacteria you've come in contact with, use hot water and really scrub your hands for at least 60 seconds.
- 3. Get Plenty of Sleep**  
To make sure your body is fully capable of fighting off illnesses this winter, create a consistent bedtime routine. This should include going to bed at the same time each night so that your body learns to anticipate sleep. As well, you might consider adding some habits that relax you at bedtime, such as a warm bath or reading a novel.
- 4. Take a Multi-Vitamin**  
This simple daily step can play an important role in keeping your body healthy. Get into the habit of taking a once-daily multi-vitamin.
- 5. Get a Flu Shot**  
There are many [flu clinics](#) at grocery stores and pharmacies where you can get a flu shot for under \$20. Or, if you prefer to see your regular doctor, you might consider getting the [flu mist](#), which is a vaccine inhaled through the nasal passages.

Unfortunately, there will be times when you come down with some type of illness, such as a nasty cold or the flu, and you'll have to figure out how to take care of yourself while also taking care of your kids. Here are some tips to help you get through a temporary illness:

- **Take Off**  
One of the best ways to speed your own recovery is to take a day off when you need to. Even if you're trying to save up your sick days for those times when your kids are sick, taking care of yourself is a must. If it helps, ask yourself what advice you'd give a friend in the same situation. Would you tell her to stay in bed for a day and get better? Then allow yourself that same latitude.
- **Take it Easy**  
If you absolutely cannot take off of work, ask yourself what you *can* do to take it easy until you're feeling better. If a typical work day is "fourth gear" for you, what would "second gear" look like?
- **Drink Lots of Fluids**  
Of course, you've heard this recommendation before, and it's a rule you follow when your kids get sick. But do you follow this rule yourself? Drinking extra fluids when you're sick really will help the illness to pass through your system more quickly. Try mixing one half cup of hot tea with one half cup of grapefruit juice.
- **Let Others Help You**  
It's okay to accept help from your friends and neighbors. If someone offers to watch your kids for you while you rest for a bit, consider taking them up on it! Or, if a friend asks you whether she can drop off some chicken soup, don't hesitate to say "Yes." You can always return the favor at another time.