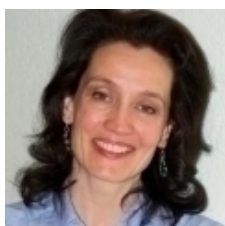


# Immune-boosting habits help during flu season

By Mandy Kendall

It is that time of year for sniffles, coughs and the dreaded flu. If you have been fortunate enough not to succumb to the current version going around, then it is possible that you are already practicing good immune-boosting habits. However, some of the following flu-busting *Qwik-e* tips may help you to continue in good health.

If you have fallen victim to a bout of the flu, all is not lost as it is never too late to give your germ fighting immune system some help to get you back on the road to recovery.



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**Vitamin D** – It is often referred to as the granddaddy of nutrients as it is vital for all sorts of functions in the body, including immune system support. You can get it from foods, supplementation and good old sunshine (you do need to expose quite a bit of skin to get effective amounts from the sun though so maybe not so great for winter). Word of warning, vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin, which means the body cannot eliminate any excess as easily as water-soluble vitamins – so be careful how much you take in supplement form. As of 2010, the Mayo Clinic reported that the recommended daily dose (RDA) was 600 IU.

**Rest** – Your body uses the time when you are asleep to heal damaged cells and reproduce new ones, so try to get at least eight hours a night.

**Exercise** – If you're feeling well and healthy, exercising will get your blood pumping and can increase your white blood cells ability to fight germs.

**Keep hydrated** – Winter heating can be very dehydrating. Your immune system needs moisture to work properly, so make sure you top up your system with water regularly.

**Omega 3** – -Omega 3 oils help support your immune system. If you don't eat a lot of fish, you could try a supplement.

**Honey** – One teaspoon mixed in a cup of hot water will help soothe a sore throat, and as a natural expectorant will help the flow of mucus out of the body. Add a little lemon juice if you prefer it a little less sweet.

**Gargle** – One-quarter to one-half teaspoon salt dissolved in an 8-ounce glass of warm water can help to relieve a sore throat.

**Alcohol** – Not only suppresses the part of the immune system that helps fight illness; it also detrimentally affects the part that helps you not get sick in the first place.

**Have some fun** – Some research has shown that immune cells are produced when we laugh.

**Frequent hand washing** – Really, is a vitally important defense against germ transmission. It is estimated that 80 percent of infections are transmitted by touch.

**Zinc** – Often thought of in the holistic health world as a powerful natural cold and flu remedy. Lozenges are the best way to get the soothing effects, but many brands are often packed with sugar, unnecessary ingredients and a low dose of zinc. So, check there aren't too many ingredients on the label and look for a higher percentage of zinc. The Mayo Clinic

states the following dosages for zinc taken by mouth; 11 mg for males 19 years old and older; 8 mg for females 19 years and older.

**Medication** – The CDC reports that you will only be about 60 percent protected after a flu shot so, even if you've had one, it is still worth practicing good healthy habits too. And remember: antibiotics cannot help with flu viruses and will only kill off good bacteria that help fight off infections.

Until next time.

*Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at [connect@healthconnective.com](mailto:connect@healthconnective.com) or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.*