

Leyla Weighs In: Five ways to stay healthy during cold and flu season



✘ Besides regular hand washing—which can reduce your chances of getting the flu by 50 percent according to the CDC—here are some other things you can do to keep your immune system optimal during cold and flu season:

Take a probiotic. As much as 70 percent of the immune system is in the gut – the gut-associated lymphoid tissue (GALT). Keeping your gastrointestinal tract inoculated with beneficial microbiota is the first order of business in maintaining healthy immunity.

Tame your sweet tooth. In laboratory experiments, sugar is found to suppress white blood cells – the soldiers of your immune system. Besides its ability to destabilize blood sugar, it is also an antinutrient, capable of causing deficiencies in B vitamins and magnesium.

Get your Zzzzz's. Not getting enough shut-eye is another notorious immune system suppressor. If you regularly get less than six hours of sleep a night, you may be more prone to catching a cold this season. Resolve to get seven to eight hours of sleep every night because rest and repair are critical for an optimally functioning immune system. And a nice side effect to getting enough sleep is diminished food cravings.

Exercise, but don't overdo it. The benefits of exercise are indisputable for good health and overall wellness. But *too much* exercise has its downside. Elite athletes and marathoners are more prone to colds and flu because all that training hampers the immune system. Also, if you already have a cold, exercising when you shouldn't may prolong your rehab. When you're sick, you need rest, not a six-mile run.

Last but not least, take some immune-enhancing supplements: **Vitamin C, zinc, and olive leaf extract** are mainstays during cold and flu season. Take with your meals for optimal absorption. But if you've already come down with the sniffles, try Viracid. Most of these are available in the *Intelligent Medicine Immune Support Protocol*.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN