

Fighting Colds and Flu

With reports of flue already affecting people, it is time to do what you can to protect yourself from colds and flu. Here are some tips:

- 1. Get a flu shot. While no flu vaccine is 100% effective, it does reduce your risk of flu-related hospitalization.**
- 2. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Five servings a day gives you many antioxidants, vitamins and minerals to boost your immune system. Fresh, frozen or canned varieties are all beneficial.**
- 3. Get up and walk! Even a brisk 20 minute walk in cold weather every day can reduce cold and flu symptoms.**
- 4. Vitamin E builds the immune system. It can help the body=s response to the flue vaccine and risks of upper respiratory infections.**
- 5. Consume foods rich in zinc which are found in meats and poultry, legumes, whole grains and nuts plus fortified cereals. Don=t overdo it as too much can be harmful.**
- 6. Lose weight. A reduction in weight can improve the immune response. Always follow your doctor=s recommendations for best results.**
- 7. Drink fluids. Water, or even green tea, is beneficial to reduce inflammation.**
- 8. Wash your hands. This cannot be emphasized enough. Wash frequently and avoid rubbing your eyes and nose with dirty hands.**
- 9. Sleep cures many things. Research has shown a link between a brain-specific protein and sleep that can fight flu symptoms.**
- 10. Know your body. When you feel tired and run down, that stresses your immune system and increases your chance of illness.**

What about vitamin C? While many think taking a lot of vitamin C can keep illness away, the science does not back this up. Vitamin C supplements will not prevent you from getting a cold, but might shorten the duration of illness.

If you are ill, stay home. This will help reduce the spread of colds and flu.

