

Healthy Living Newsletter

A MedWatch publication to keep you healthy and informed.

December, 2017

Nutrition Corner

Immunity-Boosting Foods You Should Be Eating More of This Winter



What you eat can have a major influence on your body's ability to fight viruses or to bounce back quickly from illnesses.

Here are some foods that will boost your immunities

Tea. In a Harvard study, people who drank 5 cups of black tea per day for 2 weeks had 10 times more virus-fighting interferon in their blood than others who drank a placebo hot drink.

Garlic. This potent onion relative contains the active ingredient allicin, which fights infection and bacteria.

Sweet potatoes. The vitamin A found in sweet potatoes plays a major role in the production of connective tissue, a key component of skin, which serves as a first-line of defense against bacteria and viruses.

Iron-rich foods. Iron is a mineral that plays an important role in immune function. Boost your intake of iron-rich foods such as meat, poultry, fish, legumes, nuts, seeds, spinach, broccoli and dried fruit.

Probiotics. Probiotics are "good" bacteria that can help keep the body healthy and protect it from "bad" bacteria. Foods such as yogurt, sauerkraut, pickles and buttermilk contain probiotics.

Taking Control of Your Health

What You Should Know About the Flu

The annual flu season is upon us – usually beginning as early as October, in full swing by December, and at its peak in January and February. Understanding the flu will help you protect your family from the effects of this dangerous illness:

What is the flu? Influenza (flu) is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of flu infection can result in hospitalization or death. Every year, complications of the flu require more than 200,000 people in the United States to be hospitalized. Serious illness is more likely in the very young, older adults, pregnant women, and people who have ongoing health problems such as asthma or other forms of lung disease.

How is the flu virus transmitted? Flu viruses travel through the air in droplets when someone with the infection coughs, sneezes or talks. You can inhale the droplets directly, or you can pick up the germs from an object — such as a telephone or computer keyboard — and then transfer them to your eyes, nose or mouth. People with the virus are likely contagious from the day before symptoms first appear until about five days after symptoms begin.

What are the symptoms of the flu? Detecting early symptoms of the flu can prevent the spread of the virus and possibly help you treat the illness before it gets worse. Early symptoms can include fatigue, muscle and body aches, chills, cough, sore throat, runny nose and headaches. In some cases the flu can be accompanied by vomiting and diarrhea.

What is the treatment for the flu? Usually, you'll need nothing more than bed rest to treat the flu. Treating your symptoms will help you feel better but will not make the flu go away faster. Drink plenty of fluids and rest until the flu is fully resolved. Acetaminophen (sample brand name: Tylenol) can relieve fever, headache, and muscle aches.

When to seek help. Most people with the flu recover within one to two weeks without treatment. However, serious complications of the flu can occur. Call your doctor or nurse immediately if: you feel short of breath or have trouble breathing, have pain or pressure in your chest or stomach, you feel confused, become dehydrated or cannot stop vomiting or cannot drink enough fluids.

6 Common Myths about the Flu

Myth #1: You can get the flu from the flu vaccine.	Truth: The flu vaccine contains an inactivated virus or no flu virus at all so it cannot give you the flu.
Myth #2: The flu is just a bad cold.	Truth: The flu is a serious disease. Every year in the US, approximately 200,000 people are hospitalized and tens of thousands of people die because of the flu.
Myth #3: It is not necessary for children to get a flu vaccine.	Truth: Children are 2-3 times more likely to develop the flu than adults because of their less-developed immune systems. The Centers for Disease Control recommends that everyone 6 months or older should get vaccinated every year.
Myth #4: The side effects of the vaccine are worse than the flu itself.	Truth: Most people who get the flu shot have little or no reaction.
Myth #5: You must be vaccinated in the Fall to be protected against the flu.	Truth: Vaccinations can be given at any time during the flu season—even getting a vaccination later in the season (December through March) can still help protect you from influenza.
Myth #6: Healthy people don't need a flu vaccine.	Truth: The flu can be potentially serious, even deadly for anyone, regardless of age or health status

Your Total Lifestyle Coach (TLC) is your 'health advocate' – a GPS to help you navigate the complex healthcare map. Contact your TLC at (800) 386-5475 for personalized tools and resources to help you maintain your good health.