

[IMAGE]

Beware: Cold Season is Back!

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Summer season has officially passed and yes, cold season is back. Do you know the earliest signs of cold symptoms and what to do about them?

First things first, before we even get to that, the most important thing is to avoid getting colds. I know you've feel like you've been told to wash your hands frequently a million times, but that's because it's important information that you should implement. The easiest way to contract viral and bacterial germs is to not wash your hands frequently throughout your day. We deposit germs all the time throughout every day on everything we touch, whether it's door knobs, desks, pens, light switches or at sink facets, you name it, we are depositing germs. Generally, that's not super scary but if someone with a serious infection or cold touched it before you, there a very likely chance you will also catch something. So, please remember to wash your hands frequently.

Now, moving onto cold prevention and how to mitigate the severity of cold symptoms. Luckily, there are several natural ways you can conquer a cold. There are a few vitamins you should take during the cold season to help your baseline immune system. You should of course check with your primary care doctor before taking these and have him or her monitor your vitamin levels while you are on them but you should consider the following to have a strong immune system in place: vitamin C, vitamin D3, and probiotics. These are the basic three you should have that should generally be safe for most people.

cold season - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark There are other supplements that are a bit more complicated and should be started and monitored by your integrative practitioner and that includes black elderberry, Echinacea, quercetin, turmeric, zinc, and cordyceps, just to name a few options. These supplements are still relatively safe but at the full treatment dosages, you may need to just make sure that you have your doctor following you so that you don't over-do the dosing.

If you happen to begin to get symptoms of a cold another good way to begin to fight an oncoming illness is by getting active. By doing aerobic exercise regularly it will speed up the heart to pump larger quantities of blood; makes you breathe faster to help transfer oxygen from your lungs to your blood; and makes you

sweat once your body heats up. These exercises help increase the body's natural virus-killing cells.

Finally, you should of course eat lots of vegetables, fruits, nuts and legumes to get a wide array of vitamins and minerals. By eating this way, your body will naturally be able to arm itself against the viral and bacterial enemies you are facing at every turn during the winter season. As always, I recommend that you have your doctor examine you at the first signs of infection to make sure you're just battling a common cold. During the Fall, there are numerous viruses that tend to spread and often a common cold could be mistaken for something else.

All too often, early symptoms to something more serious can be misleading so make sure you check in with your doctor for an evaluation when you get any symptoms; this way, you can ensure that it's nothing too serious, and basic principles of resting, hydrating, and eating healthy foods will get you back on your feet in no time at all.

Dr. Julie T. Chen is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit www.makinghealthyez.com.

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