

# Wellness Works

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## Boost Your Immune System: Easy Ways to Help Chase Away Winter Illness

Even if you are a compulsive hand-washer and turn your head when you hear someone sneeze, you may still manage to catch a cold every winter.

Prevention isn't always about fighting germs. Your health is also affected by what you eat, how you handle stress and other factors.

By adding some of the habits below to your routine, you will likely have a stronger immune system and stay healthier this winter.

**Exercise** – Sure, it's easy to curl up on the couch. Instead, go for a walk. Physical activity releases endorphins in your brain. These chemicals not only make you feel good, they strengthen your immune system by raising your white blood cell count.



**Round out your plate** – If you eat chicken breast, green beans and corn every night, all year long, you are missing out on key vitamins provided by other foods. Choose a wide range of foods, including brown rice, low fat protein sources such as fish and beans, and five to nine daily servings of fruits and vegetables.

**Make time for your friends** – You may think spending time with your friends raises your chances of catching a cold, but your social network actually gives you a healthy edge. Studies have found that people who socialize less have weaker immune systems.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## Has Your Coffee Gone beyond Basic Black?

A plain cup of coffee has only a couple of calories and no fat, but when you "dress it up" with sugar, milk or cream, the calorie, fat and sugar count can make a big difference. If you like cream in your coffee, try replacing it with fat-free milk. A "skinny" 16-ounce latte made with skim milk has no fat and 160 calories, compared to 14 grams of fat and 260 calories in a regular 16-ounce latte.



*Source: Mayo Clinic*



## What is Metabolic Syndrome, and Should You be Concerned?

Metabolic syndrome is a group of health problems including the following:

- Too much fat around the waist
- High blood pressure
- High triglycerides (fat in the blood)
- High blood sugar
- Not enough good cholesterol (HDL)

Left unchecked, these problems raise your risk of heart attack, stroke and diabetes.

While metabolic syndrome is a reason for concern, there is much you can do to lower your risk factors. By living an active lifestyle and eating a healthy diet, you can help manage your weight and improve your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose levels.

If you think you are at risk for metabolic syndrome, ask your doctor about getting an evaluation.

*Source: American College of Physicians*



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## Time for Your Annual Check-up: Preparation is the Key



Yearly check-ups with your doctor are a great way to identify health problems early and make needed changes to your health care routine. Get the most out of your physical exam by being prepared. Here are some suggestions:

1. Make a list of questions or concerns to share with your doctor. It is easy to forget your questions once you are at the appointment.
2. Ask about ongoing prevention including screenings, tests and immunizations.
3. Describe all your symptoms; don't leave out any details.
4. If your doctor prescribes a drug, ask about the side effects and remind your doctor about other drugs you are taking, even over-the-counter and herbal remedies.
5. If your doctor seems to be in a hurry, ask for a follow-up phone call so you can address any other questions or concerns.

Source: Cleveland Clinic

## Bone-building Nutrients

Calcium is well-known for its role in keeping bones healthy, but did you know the body also requires magnesium and vitamin D to build bones? Often, we don't get enough of these nutrients in our diets.



To get more magnesium, eat brown rice. Vitamin D is often added to milk, orange juice and cereals.

For healthy bones, experts suggest having the following each day:

- Calcium: 1,200 milligrams (mg) per day, broken up into three doses
- Magnesium: 400 mg per day for women and 33 mg per day for men
- Vitamin D: 400 international units (IU) per day if you are under the age of 70 and 600 IU if you are over 70 years of age

Source: American Dietetic Association



## Why Snoring is No Laughing Matter

Snoring may sound funny (or irritating if it makes you lose sleep), but it's no laughing matter. Snoring can be a sign of a serious health problem called obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).

Affecting 12 million Americans (twice as likely in men), OSA involves abnormal breathing patterns during sleep. If OSA is not treated, it can lead to other major health issues such as hypertension, heart failure, cardiac arrhythmias and diabetes.

OSA symptoms include loud snoring, choking or gasping that wakes you from your sleep. OSA can also involve pauses in breathing during sleep, major daytime drowsiness, morning headaches, kicking or jerking legs while sleeping, or the inability to go to sleep or stay asleep.

If you think you have OSA symptoms, talk to your doctor.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

## How to Build Winning Work Relationships

Day in, day out stress from poor work relationships doesn't have to negatively impact your job. Try these suggestions to build a friendly climate of mutual respect:

- Be positive and warm around others.
- Learn to communicate effectively.
- Be a team player.
- Avoid gossip.
- Try to resolve conflicts.
- Don't brag or take too much credit.
- Respect coworkers' private issues.
- Avoid harassment.
- Be courteous.



The old saying "kill them with kindness" couldn't be truer when it comes to your working relationships. Challenge yourself to present your best attitude around your coworkers and you very well may get the same in return.

Source: Mayo Clinic