

TIPS FOR STAYING HEALTHY DURING THE WINTER



Eat Healthy and Stay Active

It can be challenging to eat healthy and stay active during the holidays. Holiday parties and big family meals may tempt us away from our healthy eating habits. Allow yourself to have your favorite foods but stick to smaller servings and balance them with healthier options. Since winter is peak cold and flu season, opt for immunity-boosting foods such as mushrooms, garlic, citrus fruits, herbs and spices, probiotics, prebiotics, and chicken soup.

Staying active can help you keep a healthy weight during the holiday season. Look for opportunities to work physical activities into your holiday: Go for a stroll after a family meal, take a walk at the mall, or dance to your favorite holiday music. Aim to get at least 150 minutes a week of physical activity. For example, that could be at least 20 minutes a day or 30 minutes five days a week. It's important to move more and sit less.

Get Some Sun

While the availability of sunlight is limited during the winter months, it's important to spend some time outdoors even when it's cold. Sunlight has been shown to help improve your mood by boosting the release of a hormone called serotonin. Exposure to sunlight is especially important to help treat those suffering from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a form of depression. Exposure to sunlight also helps regulate your circadian rhythm, which controls your body clock and affects sleep habits.

Maintain Good Skin Health

Cold weather can wreak havoc on your skin, leaving you with dryness, flaking, cracking, and in some cases, eczema. To keep your skin soft and healthy through the winter, be sure to drink plenty of water, hydrate your skin with an ointment moisturizer, and use sunscreen whenever you're out during the day. Although it is recommended to spend plenty of time outside, exposure to the sun's rays, even in the winter, can still have damaging effects on your skin, so be sure to choose a sunscreen that has an SPF factor of 30 or above to ensure adequate protection.

Sources

Photo Credit: Adobe Stock

8 CDC Health Tips for a Safe and Healthy Holiday – <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p1119-8-holiday-tips.html>

Winter Wellness: Six Tips for Staying Healthy in Cold Weather Season – <https://insights.ibx.com/winter-wellness-six-tips-staying-healthy-cold-weather-season-2/>

Get Your Flu Shot

Influenza (flu) is more than a cold, or even a “bad cold.” It can result in serious health complications like pneumonia, bacterial infections, hospitalization, or death. Few people get vaccinated against flu after the end of November even though flu activity peaks between December and February, and can last as late as May. If you didn't yet get a flu vaccination this season, it's not too late! The CDC recommends that everyone age 6 months and older get vaccinated now if they have not already been vaccinated this season.

Food Safety

Food poisoning can ruin even the most festive celebrations. Each year, an estimated 1 in 6 Americans get sick from eating contaminated food. Take simple steps to protect your family's health when you prepare and serve holiday meals such as:

- Wash your hands and work surfaces before, during, and after preparing food, and before eating.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separated during preparation.
- Cook food at the right internal temperature to kill harmful germs. Use a food thermometer to check.
- Refrigerate perishable foods, including leftovers, within two hours of buying or cooking.