

IMMUNE HEALTH

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DO EVERYONE A FAVOUR CALL IN SICK



Dr. Gregory Taylor,
Chief Public Health Officer
of Canada

When you show up for work with a sore throat, a runny nose, and the chills, don't expect to be greeted as a hero for toughing it out. You're not doing anyone a favour.

You're not productive when you're under the weather and this poses a problem for you, your employer, and even the country. Presenteeism, which is time spent at work while not productively engaged in work, drains the economy of billions of dollars every year. In fact, presenteeism costs the economy 10 times more than absenteeism according to a recent study conducted by a consultancy organization responsible for improving its clients' employees' health and performance.

The next time you wake up feeling lousy, drink tea with lemon, crawl under the covers, and don't hesitate to call in sick.

Your desktop has more germs than a toilet seat

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure — and the single best way to keep illness-causing germs at bay is to keep your hands clean. Most of us quickly run our hands under the tap before leaving the washroom, but that doesn't do the trick. Dr. Gregory Taylor, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, recommends that you wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, dry them, and then use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.

Dr. Taylor says you need to be vigilant outside the washroom too. The average desktop has more germs than the average toilet seat, so clean your phone, keyboard, and mouse with disinfecting wipes. Make regular use of hand sanitizer that is at least 60 percent alcohol. These products kill most bacteria and viruses on contact.

Just as it's important to protect yourself from your co-workers' germs, it's also important to

protect them from yours. Stay home when you're sick and, when you're at work, sneeze into the crook of your arm, not into the face of the person who sits in the next cubicle. "Sneeze into your sleeve," says Dr. Taylor. "It's not just for you. It's for your entire community."

As another step in keeping illness at bay, Dr. Taylor encourages Canadians to get an annual flu shot. He describes the vaccine as "safe and effective at reducing and limiting the flu."

Above all else, Dr. Taylor advocates for Canadians to embrace a healthy lifestyle. Practising what he preaches, Dr. Taylor takes a holistic approach to staying healthy. "I get enough sleep every night, eat healthy meals, keep alcohol consumption to a minimum, and exercise regularly. I also stay at home when I'm sick," he adds. "That goes without saying." ●

Randi Druzin



90% of office workers come in to work when they're sick



People with the flu can spread it to others up to about **6 feet away**



Good hand hygiene practices can reduce illness, absenteeism, and associated costs by **about 50%**

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Make Hands Matter
in the Workplace

PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

WHY EVERYONE SHOULD GET THE FLU SHOT

With flu season almost upon us, many of us will start thinking about whether or not to vaccinate ourselves and our families against the influenza virus.

Last year, less than one third of Canadians got the flu shot. While vaccination rates started to creep up in the early part of the decade, the rates have since dropped again.

The influenza vaccine, or flu shot, is a simple jab in the arm, easily accessible across the country, and free of charge in all but three provinces. Yet, up to 70 percent of Canadians choose not to receive it.

The risk of declining vaccination rates

“The flu shot is something that everyone should be getting every year,” says Dr. Matthew B. Stanbrook, Staff Physician at Toronto’s University Health Network. “Public health guidelines in every province recommend getting it and it’s for a good reason: influenza is really common, it happens every year, and everyone in theory is at risk.”

Declining rates of vaccination have been attributed to people feeling it is unnecessary. But, what many people may not consider is the role of vaccination in building community immunity. In every community there are groups of people who have a far greater risk both of getting the flu and of experiencing grave consequences such as infections and pneumonia.

“The likelihood of older people, small chil-

dren, or people with chronic health conditions getting the flu is so much greater if people around them are not vaccinated,” says Diane Feldman, Certified Respiratory Educator at The Lung Association. “For those people, complications from the flu can be dire.”



Seniors over 65, young children, and those with chronic health conditions like heart disease and asthma are **most at-risk** to develop complications from influenza

When a healthy individual chooses not to get immunized, they are not just putting themselves at risk — they are increasing

the chances of transmitting a potentially fatal virus to some of the most vulnerable members of the community. Community immunity, or herd immunity, is a form of indirect protection from infectious diseases that occurs when a large percentage of the population is immune to an infection, thereby providing protection for individuals who are not immune.

Building community immunity

“Herd immunity is terribly important — it’s what keeps our populations safe,” says Dr. Tom Kovesi, Pediatric Respirologist at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario. “With influenza it’s tough because you need about 80 percent or more of the population getting the vaccine for herd immunity to really work and we’re just not there yet.”

“If you’re not convinced about getting the flu shot for your own protection,” says Feldman, “you should get it for the protection of other, more vulnerable, people around you.” ●

Bronwen Keyes-Bevan



PROBIOTICS

Can Help Fight Colds and Flu

Most of us don’t dwell on the bacteria in our gut, but it plays a critical role in keeping us healthy.

By ingesting fermented foods and incorporating probiotics into your diet, you can improve the body’s defences, not just in the gut. Studies have shown that probiotics can be effective in reducing the frequency and duration of common respiratory tract infections such as the common cold and illnesses with flu-like symptoms.

“Everyone can benefit from taking probiotics but not all probiotics are created equal,” says Dragana Skokovic-Sunjic, a clinical pharmacist. “It’s important that people take the right strain for what they require.” The Alliance for Education on Probiotics (AEP) has curated a detailed guide for healthcare professionals, *The Clinical Guide to Probiotic Supplements Available in Canada*, which provides information on products containing probiotics and how best to use them.

According to Dr. Gregor Reid, Director of the Canadian Centre for Human Microbiome and Probiotic Research at the Lawson Health Research Institute, by incorporating probiotics into your daily routine “evidence suggests they may delay the onset of type 2 diabetes, and better manage gut conditions, allergies, and urogenital infections in women,” ultimately saving Canada’s health care system hundreds of millions of dollars. ●

Bronwen Keyes-Bevan

Protect
the people
you love.



Get the flu shot.

For information about the flu vaccine and other lung health issues call the

Lung Health Info Line

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THE  LUNG ASSOCIATION™

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

How Small Acts of Kindness Can GO A LONG WAY



SARA DIMERMAN

Psychologist, Parenting and Relationship Expert, and Creator of www.helpmesara.com

Supporting Partner



Along with comfy couches, a chair, bookshelf, and filing cabinet, tissues are a staple in my office. It's a given that at some point in any counselling session, tears will swell and fall down the cheeks of clients as they recall painful or difficult memories.

More than words can say

As a psychologist, I often find myself transfixed on the faces of strangers around me. On one particular occasion, I was standing in front of a seated passenger whose eyes appeared swollen. Along the way she began to cry, silently. Embarrassed, she hurriedly wiped away her tears with the back of her hand. Without hesitation I reached into my purse and handed her a small packet of tissues. At first she hesitated, perhaps not used to random acts of kindness from a stranger, and then a smile spread across her ruddy cheeks. She reached for the packet and thanked me with the nod of her head. We didn't speak during what was

left of the journey to her destination, but much more than words were exchanged in that short time. My heart swelled with compassion for another human being whose sorrow was obviously so deep she could not contain it. And she, I hope, was touched that someone had recognized her pain and reached out to her in a way that perhaps more than words could say.

Connection is key

Empathy is one of the key characteristics of character building. Finding ways to reach out to others in small, unexpected ways — such as paying or contributing towards someone's meal in a cafeteria line up — shows you care. Doing so allows you to personally experience the intrinsic gift that comes along with spreading warmth in a sometimes seemingly disconnected world. ●

Sara Dimerman



See for yourself. Go to www.Kleenex.com to watch a social experiment from Kleenex and to get a FREE share pack!

FIGHTING COLD AND FLU SEASON THE NATURAL WAY

CityTV's health and wellness expert and homeopathic doctor, Dr. Bryce Wylde, reveals how nutrition and alternative medicine can get you through cold and flu season with ease.

MEDIAPLANET There are so many natural health remedies on the shelves. What's important to look for?

DR. BRYCE WYLDE You absolutely can't trust just anything on the shelves of a health food store. Health Canada has put in place the assignment of Natural Product Numbers (NPN) on natural health products. Consumers can feel pretty safe about a natural health product with a label claim and an NPN on it because that's a seal of approval showing evidence of safety.

MP What is nutrition's role in preventing the cold, cough, and flu?

BW When it comes to nutrition, everyone needs

to be eating a lot more micronutrient-rich foods — including Asian mushrooms, onions, and nutrient-rich greens — to help activate our immune systems. These foods help your front-line immune defense and stimulate natural killer cells.

MP Okay, so you catch the cough, cold, or flu. What's your suggested remedy?

BW To remedy a cough, you can create an at-home cough syrup by simply slicing up an onion and spreading a generous amount of honey over it. Let the juices accumulate on a plate, and take a few tablespoons of that every few hours.

Once there is a cold or flu in place, there's a number of things you can do: stay home, rest,

don't come in contact with others, drink lots of fluids, eat soup, keep an eye on your temperature, and take natural remedies to shorten the duration and reduce symptoms.



MP What vitamins play a crucial role during cold and flu season?

BW I call these the ACES: Vitamin A, C, E, and Selenium. Plus N-acetylcysteine (NAC) and alpha-lipoic acid (ALA). They play a crucial role in increasing naturally produced glutathione in the body — an incredible antioxidant necessary to keep a robust immune system. It helps you to detoxify, deal with infections, treat upper respiratory tract infections, and loosen phlegm. ●

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WAYS TO SUCK IT UP WHEN COUGH, COLD, OR FLU STRIKE

Despite the many ways to prevent getting sick, millions of Canadians will still fall ill over the coming months. What then? Here are some of the best recommendations to manage symptoms and soothe that nasty cough, sore throat, and congested head.



Dr. Lee Schofield,
Family Physician



Abby Langer,
Registered Dietitian

- 1 **Rest your body**
There is no substitute for simply resting your body while fighting a cold or the flu. "Once you have a virus, you will have to let it run its course, which can last up to two weeks," says Dr. Lee Schofield, a family physician. "If you are run down and tired it will be harder to fight the virus. Rest will help boost your immune system and not prolong your illness."
- 2 **Stay hydrated**
Drink water, have some soup, and eat juicy fruits such as melons, grapes, and mangoes that contain lots of water and vitamin C. "We lose a lot of fluids when we're sick, and when we feel crappy sometimes we don't feel like drinking and eating, so we need to remind ourselves to stay hydrated," says Abby Langer, a registered dietitian. "Staying hydrated will loosen the mucous and congestion."
- 3 **Ease muscle aches and pain**
Muscle aches and pain are typically associated with the flu. To ease the symptoms, Dr. Schofield suggests taking ibuprofen

or acetaminophen, such as Tylenol, and recommends following dosage amounts on the packaging. If you are an older adult, or have chronic kidney or liver disease, you should consult a health care provider before taking pain relief medications.

4 **Liquid gold for your body**
A teaspoon of honey three times a day can suppress a cough and soothe a sore throat. According to Langer, Manuka honey is best because of its strong anti-bacterial properties. It's a great option for children, who may not like the taste of cough syrup, and especially for those less than six years of age, who shouldn't take cough medicine.

5 **Saltwater can be good for you**
Dr. Schofield says salt's anti-bacterial properties can relieve irritated throats. Reap the benefits by gargling salt water. Likewise, when your nose and sinuses are congested, you can use a nasal decongestant or saline rinse.

6 **A friend of the sea**
To alleviate a cough or sore throat you want to use a menthol based lozenge, but Langer says not all lozenges are the same. Her preference is Fisherman's Friend, because they have anti-bacterial properties, no artificial preservatives, and they are sucrose free. They come in a variety of flavours, and offer strong relief. ■

Ken Donohue

A LOZENGE A DAY KEEPS THE WHINING AWAY

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KEEPING IT CLEAN

HOW DISINFECTING SHARED SPACES CAN FEND OFF ILLNESS

It's easy to take your health for granted. For the millions of Canadians who will get the flu or a cold this winter, the sentiment becomes all too evident. For most it will be an uncomfortable inconvenience; for others it can be fatal.

The good news is these illnesses are largely preventable. With a few easy steps you can protect yourself and your community this cold and flu season. Ensure your vaccinations are up to date, wash your hands regularly, and sanitize hard surfaces with disinfectant spray or wipes like Clorox wipes, which kill 99.9 percent of viruses, including some of the nastiest ones — E. coli, salmonella, and those found in hospitals.

Viruses love complacency

When illnesses such as the flu or norovirus sweep through schools, daycares, retirement homes, and other public places, we are vigilant about making sure the environment is clean — but when they pass, we become complacent.

Employers owe it to their teams to consistently make sure that work spaces are disinfected, especially around the peak of cold and flu season — it will keep employees healthy, and is beneficial for the bottom line. For more than a century,

Clorox has been providing innovative solutions that are simple and safe for consumers. “With our wipes, people can wipe and walk away feeling confident that surfaces are clean,” says Barley Chironda, a nurse by background, and now the National Healthcare Sales Director and Infection Control Specialist at Clorox Canada. “We

Think any hard surface — fridge doors, countertops, toys, your desk and keyboard at work, door knobs, public transit — they're all crawling with germs.

need to encourage a culture where people can ask for these types of disinfectant products to protect their workspaces.”

And, it's not just the office that deserves extra attention — anywhere people come into close contact with one another is a potential site for

infection, like daycares for example. “I am always pleased when I see my children's daycare use Clorox wipes, because I know they work and will reduce illness,” Chironda expresses.

Cold weather is the perfect storm for germs

As winter approaches we tend to stay indoors more, and living closer together makes it easier for bugs to spread. Viruses and respiratory bugs thrive in these colder environments, which is why we often get sick in the winter months. We unknowingly encourage their spread by not disinfecting surfaces, and as a result get ourselves and those around us sick. Think any hard surface — fridge doors, countertops, toys, your desk and keyboard at work, door knobs, public transit — they're all crawling with germs. Worse yet, viruses can stick around for days waiting to invade your body where they'll go to work disrupting your immune system and making you miserable.

So, wipe away those bugs, and stay healthy this season. ●

Ken Donohue



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