

# Stay Healthy This Winter Season

Have you ever asked yourself....Why does winter make us sick? Winter brings unique health challenges that affect millions of people every year. Understanding **why** we get sick more often in winter helps you take proactive steps to stay healthy.

## KEY WINTER HEALTH STATISTICS

- Cold & Flu: Americans get 1 billion colds annually, mostly in winter
- Flu Season: October-May, peaking December-February
- Vitamin D: 42% of US adults are deficient, worsening in winter
- ER visits: 25-30% increase in respiratory illness visits during winter

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND WINTER ILLNESS

There are several factors that make winter a prime time for getting sick.

- Dry Air: low humidity dries out nasal passages, weakening your 1<sup>st</sup> line of defense
- Less Sunlight: reduced Vitamin D production weakens immune function
- Indoor crowding: more time indoors increases virus transmission
- Cold Temperatures: cold air may help viruses survive longer and replicate faster
- Less Exercise: reduced outdoor activity weakens immune response

Your daily habits have a profound impact on immune function. Small, consistent actions build powerful protection. Continue to see a checklist of some daily habits to help build that immune system.

# WINTER HEALTH DAILY CHECKLIST

### • WASH HANDS THOROUGHLY AT KEY TIMES

1. After blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing,
2. After touching high-touch surfaces (doorknobs, shopping carts)
3. After being in public spaces
4. Before touching your face, especially eyes, nose & mouth

### HYDRATE

1. Drink 8+ glasses of water

### TAKE VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENT

1. Activates immune cells that fight infection
2. May reduce respiratory infection risk by up to 50%
3. reduces inflammation

### SLEEP

#### YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEMS RESET BUTTON

1. Target- 7-9 hrs of sleep
2. Consistency- go to bed and wake at the same time daily
3. Quality- dark, cool (60-67F), quiet room
4. Wind-down: no screens 1 hr before bed

### EAT 5+ SERVINGS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

### EXERCISE FOR 30 MINUTES

OPTIONS: brisk walking, swimming, cycling, dancing  
INDOOR ALTERNATES: home workouts, yoga, mall walking

### LAST, BUT NOT LEAST.....

#### MANAGE STRESS

chronic stress weakens immunity

1. meditate 10-20 minutes
2. deep breathing 4-7-8 technique (inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 8)

Here's to a healthy winter!