Live Well, Work Well

November 2021

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It's Cold and Flu Season Again

With the fall and winter months comes flu season. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), flu activity peaks between December and February, so now's the time to ensure you're prepared. Social distancing and mask mandates significantly prevented a "twindemic" last year as the flu season coincided with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Those safety measures helped prevent a majority of flu cases. However, as more states and businesses lift mask mandates and other preventive measures, the flu virus may circulate much more freely than it did last year.

The CDC estimates that

12,000 to 61,000 people

die each year from the flu.

Preventing the Flu

The flu vaccine is your best chance of preventing the illness—especially this year. The CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine for anyone 6 months of age or older.

There are more ways to help protect yourself and others during this flu season. Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and stay home when you're ill. It's also critical to continue good hygiene by covering your coughs and sneezes and washing your hands.

Getting Vaccinated

If you're unsure about getting a flu vaccine, the CDC shares the following reasons why it's crucial to get vaccinated amid the pandemic:

- **Reduces your risk of getting sick with the flu**—The flu vaccine can reduce your risk of having to go to the doctor with the flu by 40% to 60%.
- **Reduces your risk of contracting both COVID-19 and the flu at the same time—**Battling simultaneous flu and COVID-19 infections are much worse than battling either alone and can require extended hospital stays.
- **Reduces strain on the medical system—**The flu and COVID-19 are respiratory illnesses, so they rely on the same life-saving hospital equipment.

Since the flu and coronavirus have similar symptoms, it's important to get tested if you're feeling sick. If you're worried about staying healthy during this flu season, please contact your doctor.

The Benefits Resource

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The Importance of a Good Night's Sleep

Although we gain an extra hour of sleep with the end of daylight saving time this month, the slight shift could impact your sleep cycle for up to a week. You may wake up earlier, have trouble falling asleep or even wake up often during the night.

Adults should get seven hours or more of sleep each night, according to the CDC. However, only 2 in 3 American adults get enough sleep. Sleep is essential for maintaining a healthy, productive and low-stress lifestyle. Here are a few benefits of getting a good night's sleep:

- Increased productivity and work performance—Giving your body enough time to go through all the sleep stages is necessary for energy, muscle repair, improved memory, and the release and regulation of important hormones essential for everyday functions.
- Boosted immune system—Consistent sleep strengthens your immune system, allowing for effective immune function. The immune system is critical to overall health, specifically for healing wounds, defending against infections and protecting against chronic illnesses.
- Improved mental health—Getting enough sleep can help alleviate feelings of fatigue that may contribute to stress, depression and anxiety. Symptoms of fatigue can be drowsiness, loss of energy and mood swings.

As our clocks fall back one hour, this is a prime opportunity to fall back into good sleep habits. For more information on how to improve your sleep habits or to address sleep issues, contact your doctor today.

3 Steps to Better Sleep

Avoid electronics before bedtime.

Pass up caffeine after midday.

Establish a consistent sleep routine.

A Beginner's Guide to Meal Prepping

Meal prepping is the concept of preparing whole meals for the week ahead. It can lead to more nutritious meal choices since you're deciding on meals ahead of time. Consider the following tips to streamline the meal prep process:

- Stick to a schedule for when you plan, grocery shop and prep your meals.
- Pick recipes with varying cooking methods (e.g., oven or stovetop).
- Choose which meals to prepare first based on their cook times.
- Store meals properly in portioned containers. Refrigerate meals you're planning to eat within three to four days and freeze the rest.

Meal prep doesn't have to be intimidating. Try these basic steps to cut down on cooking time and have more time for other activities.

Broccoli Potato Soup

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients

4 cups broccoli (chopped)
1 small onion (chopped)
4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 cup nonfat evaporated milk
1 cup instant mashed potatoes (prepared in water)
Salt and black pepper, to taste
¼ cup shredded cheddar cheese

Preparations

1) Combine broccoli, onion and broth in large saucepan. Bring to a boil.
2) Reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
3) Add milk to the soup. Slowly stir in the potatoes.
4) Cook, stirring constantly, until bubbly and thickened.
5) Season with salt and black pepper. Stir in a little more milk or water if soup becomes too thick.
6) Ladle into serving bowls.
7) Sprinkle about 1 Tbsp. cheese over each serving.

Nutritional Information (per serving)

Total calories	194
Total fat	5 g
Protein	15 g
Sodium	310 mg
Carbohydrate	26 g
Dietary fiber	3 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Total sugars	10 g

Source: MyPlate