



***December 2018 Health
Newsletter***



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15 tips to stay healthy in winter

Don't let colds and flu stop you this winter. Follow these tips and hints and you can continue to get more out life despite the weather forecast.

Did you know that the common cold accounts for up to three years of the average person's life? The reasons behind this rather depressing statistic are not easy to pinpoint, and in contrast to what many believe, have nothing to do with the chill in the air.

And while it is the most common illness among humans it does not occur as a result of wet hair, stress, a change in temperature, cold feet or bad weather. The fact of the matter is that when the weather forecast is at a low, our immune systems are weakened making us more susceptible to colds.

Don't let colds and flu stop you this winter. Follow these tips and hints and you can continue to get more out life despite the weather forecast.

Handy hands

- **Hands** are described as a germ factory for a reason, so be sure to wash your hands several times throughout the day using a sanitizer.
- While warm soap and water also work, make sure you don't rush the process and wash your hands for at least 20-seconds to kill all germs.
- Use paper towel to dry your hands and close the tap so that you don't come into contact with germs once again after washing them.
- Keep your hands away from your nose and mouth wherever possible so that they don't attract additional germs. And if you need to sneeze, try to do so in the crook of your arm so that the germs on your hands don't come into contact with your nose.
- Try and eat with a knife and fork so that germs are not transferred from your hands to your food.

Surface issues

- Colds and flu are spread by **viruses** which can easily spread from surface to person and person to person. For this reason it's a good idea to carry an alcohol-based cleanser with you to sterilise any surfaces you believe to be putting your health at risk.
- Antiseptic wipes should also be used to cleanse desktops and phones regularly.
- Always dispose of used tissues as they are the ultimate germ carriers.

Build immunity

- Exercise to build your immunity. Research suggests that by working out and making your heart pump a little faster you strengthen your immune system.
- If you're already sick, the general rule of thumb is that you can continue to do so if the symptoms are experienced above the neck, such as stuffy noses and sore throats. If, however, you have a temperature and are experiencing aches and pains in your body you should rest and give the gym a skip.
- Don't worry, be happy. It's a well-known fact that a positive attitude can boost your immune system.

Eat and sleep

- Get at least eight to ten hours sleep a night to prevent your immune system from weakening and making you more susceptible to colds and flu.
- Eating large quantities of fresh fruit and vegetables supports your immune system so make sure your diet is designed to protect you
- Think before you dip and be wary of sharing chip dips with friends as they may harbour unwanted germs.

Steer clear

- While it may seem perfectly obvious, stay away from people displaying symptoms such as coughing and sneezing.

Source: <https://www.health24.com/Medical/Flu/Preventing-flu/15-tips-to-stay-healthy-in-winter-20120721>



Drugs, Alcohol, and Your Oral Health

Can using drugs affect my teeth and oral health?

Yes. The use of illegal drugs, such as Methamphetamine (meth, speed, ice, glass and crystal), Heroin, Cocaine, Cannabis and Ecstasy can all have an adverse effect on the health of your teeth and gums.

How do drugs affect my dental health?

Many drugs can cause a craving for sugar, such as sweets and fizzy drinks, which can cause tooth decay.

Drugs such as Methamphetamine and Heroin can also cause you to have a dry mouth. Because there is a reduced saliva flow in the mouth, this can also lead to tooth decay and gum disease.

Some drugs, such as Ecstasy and Cocaine can lead to jaw-clenching and tooth grinding. This can result cracked or broken teeth, as well as headaches and jaw pain.

Being 'high' on drugs could also make you less likely to remember to brush your teeth regularly. This could lead to gum disease, dental decay and tooth loss.

Does drinking alcohol affect my teeth and gums?

Alcoholic drinks such as white wine, beer and cider can be very acidic. This will cause erosion of the enamel on your teeth, possibly leading to pain and sensitivity.

Spirits such as vodka and whiskey are very high in alcohol and will give you dry mouth.

Many mixers and alcopops are high in sugar. This can cause dental decay.

How does this happen?

When you eat or drink anything acidic, your teeth come under an 'acid attack' for up to one hour. During this time, your enamel is weakened and your saliva is working to return the mouth to a neutral pH level. Because drugs reduce the amount of saliva you produce, this process will take much longer than usual and your teeth could be under attack for long periods of time.

When you eat or drink anything that contains sugar, it reacts with the plaque in your mouth and produces plaque acids. It is these acids that attack our teeth and cause dental decay.

How can I help prevent the problems caused by drugs and alcohol?

A good oral hygiene routine at home can partly help to reduce the damage caused by taking drugs and drinking alcohol.

However, reducing or stopping these bad habits would be the best long-term solution for your overall health and the health of your teeth and gums.

How can I look after my oral health?

You should brush your teeth last thing at night and at least one other time during the day, using a fluoride toothpaste that contains between 1350-1500 ppm (parts per million) fluoride.

You should not brush your teeth for one hour after you have eaten or drank anything. If you brush your teeth before this time, you might brush away small particles of softened enamel, which can lead to dental erosion.

Cleaning in-between your teeth with interdental brushes, tape or floss will help to prevent any plaque or debris from building-up and reduce the risk of decay and gum disease.

If you want to use a mouthwash, this can be very useful. However, do not use the mouthwash within one hour of brushing your teeth. This will wash away the fluoride from the toothpaste and leave your teeth at risk of tooth decay. Mouthwash should not replace regular tooth brushing.

To help reduce tooth decay, cut down on how often you have sugary foods and drinks.

If your dentist believes that you are at a high risk of dental decay, due to either drugs, alcohol or a sugary diet, he may prescribe a high-fluoride toothpaste for you to use to help to protect the teeth.

Does vomiting affect my oral health?

Yes. The acid in the vomit will cause the enamel to weaken. It is important that you do not brush your teeth straight after vomiting. You can either use a fluoride mouthwash, chew sugar-free, or have a drink of water to help to neutralise this acid.

Learn More at: <https://www.dentalhealth.org/drugs-alcohol-and-your-oral-health>

10 TIPS

for Healthy Winter Skin

Avoiding dryness

AND STAYING MOISTURIZED

Cold weather can be very drying, even to the most supple skin.

Here are some ways you can prevent flaky skin this winter.

1

Here comes the sun

MOISTURIZE WITH SPF

Even though we can't feel the warmth of the sun during the winter, its UVA and UVB rays are still very strong and damaging.



2

Keep it cool

AVOID HOT WATER

We may crave hot showers as a respite from the winter weather, but too much hot water can dry out your skin.



3

Stay hydrated

DRINK MORE WATER

The cold weather may make you feel less thirsty, but your skin needs hydration just as much as in the summer.



4

Think about ingredients

USE OIL-BASED MOISTURIZERS

Oil-based moisturizers with vitamins C and E will keep your skin moist for a longer period of time than water-based moisturizers.



5

Be as natural

GO NATURAL

Try using coconut oil, honey and aloe to soften up your skin. These 100 percent natural products





Employee Wellness Tips

- **Plan ahead for screenings!** As the new year approaches, make your health a priority! Evaluate when the last time you had a physical exam, dental exam, age appropriate screenings, blood work, eye exam, etc., and take initiative to get those appointments scheduled!
- **Replace your toothbrush!** Did you know that it is recommended to replace your toothbrush at least every 3 months and more frequently when experiencing illness?



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Thank You for viewing the NCWVCAA December Health Newsletter. If you have questions, suggestions, or would like to join the NCWVCAA Health Services Advisory Committee, please contact Tiffany Pigott at the above contact information or by email at tiffanypigott@ncwvcaa.org.