



**6 Tips For
Protecting
Against the Flu**



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**Detoxing To
Kick Start
Good Health in
the New Year**

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6 Tips For Protecting Against the Flu

The flu season has been a doozy this year. Especially for our neighbours south of the border who have declared public health emergencies in some states. It's even reached the pop culture level with stars unable to collect their Golden Globes because they're home sick with the flu, and celebrities getting their flu shots on TV. Piers Morgan got his vaccine on Dr. Oz and 10 days later was seen on his own CNN show, *Piers Morgan Tonight* saying that "within 10 days I've been struck down", visibly ill with the flu. So is the flu shot the answer or just a shot in the dark?



The answer is not simple, nor is it black and white. Studies around the efficacy of the flu vaccine have varied greatly from 30% to 80%. Efficacy is often reliant on how closely the 3 strains chosen by the World Health Organization for the vaccine match the circulating flu strains. But this year's flu vaccine contains a very close match to the circulating strains and reports are showing that the efficacy of the flu vaccine is still only slightly over 60%.

When considering whether or not to get the flu shot, there are also side effects to consider. The 2009-2010 European flu vaccine reportedly left over 800 people with narcolepsy. And with the rush to increase flu vaccine production in the US, the FDA has recently approved genetically engineered vaccines that use "virus-like particles" grown inside insects, and a vaccine grown on a dog kidney culture (vs. the typical egg medium). Will this lead to safer vaccines or more side effects? Only time will tell.

There are obvious pros and cons to getting the flu shot. No matter what you chose for you and your family, the best protection, whether or not you get the flu shot, is to build and maintain a strong immune system. This will protect you from side effects if you get the shot, and protect you from ALL strains of the influenza virus and other viruses that cause the common cold, as well as prevent complications like pneumonia and bronchitis.

Some tips to help protect you during the flu season:

1. **Wash your hands.** This is an obvious one, but is so effective, it's worth driving the point home. Wash with warm water and soap for as long as it takes to sing Happy Birthday. Wash often, especially after being in a public place and before eating.

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Vitamin D Supplementing

In the winter, most Canadians can benefit from some extra Vitamin D, which helps us absorb calcium, keep our bones strong, improve immune health, fight cancer, lower blood pressure, and prevent diabetes.

We get 90% of our Vitamin D from skin exposure to the sun's UV-B. In the winter, because of the low angle of the sun, we get very little UV-B. So we could spend all day in the sun and convert little or *no* Vitamin D.

To absorb Vitamin D orally, supplements should be taken with food that contains some fat. Or the liquid "D-mulsion 1000" can be taken at any time, and gives you a whopping 1000 IU in each drop.

The American Endocrine Society recommends a daily dose of 1500-2000 IU. For those who are Vitamin D deficient, have osteoporosis, or are obese, the dose may be higher. Talk to your Naturopathic doctor or family doctor about the right amount for you.



6 Tips to Support Your New Years Resolutions

1. **Set a Date:** Once you identify the behavior you want to change, set the date that you want to begin. Mull it over for a few days. Be sure it's a realistic date for you.
2. **Track Your Progress:** Once you start getting rid of a bad habit, keep track of your progress. Use a journal or even an online blog to help you stick to your goals and help you become more aware of unhealthy habits and patterns that may arise.
3. **Be Prepared for Obstacles:** Self-control is like a muscle. The more you exercise it, the stronger it becomes. While in training, recognize that setbacks are normal, and don't be too hard on yourself. Obstacles are to be expected and can be overcome. Develop strategies, e.g., avoid walking down the hall where there's a candy machine.
4. **One Day a Time:** While you may be motivated to cut out sweets and lose extra weight for a special event or beach vacation that is 6 months away, you may be better off focusing on day to day motivations. If your goals are far off in the future, you may give them up before reaching them.
5. **Replace Your Old Habits:** According to the National Institutes of Health, one of the best ways to kick a bad habit is to replace it with a new one. Some of our bad habits become ritualistic or compulsive, so the best way to get rid of them is to swap them with new, healthier rituals.
6. **Reward Yourself:** Don't shy away from using incentives to motivate you to stick to your goals. But careful not to pick rewards that set back your goals. For example, if you're giving up sweets, don't reward your hard work with a giant piece of cake. Instead, put a dollar in a jar for every day that you go without sweets, then use that money to buy yourself a new pair of jeans since your old ones may be too big before you know it!



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2. **Get plenty of sleep.** Our immune systems are the most active when we are sleeping. Too often I see people in my office who came down with the flu after a couple of late nights. Get at least 7-8 hours of sleep every night.
3. **Avoid sugar.** Sugar can depress your immune function for hours after ingestion. It can also increase inflammation in the body, worsening existing flu symptoms.
4. **Eat more leafy greens.** Vegetables in general, especially leafy greens, are high in vitamins and minerals that will help boost your immune system and every other system in your body. And as a bonus, eating veggies can replace less healthy foods in the diet.
5. **Take Vitamin D.** Being low in vitamin D may put you at risk for all types of infections, including the flu. See the article *Vitamin D Supplementing* in this issue for more info.
6. **Seek some professional advice.** If you are prone to getting sick, you may need more aggressive and individualized ways to improve your immune system. A Naturopathic Doctor is well trained for this and is covered by most extended health plans. For a referral to a Naturopathic Doctor near you, email us at info@wellstr.com.

Detoxing To Kick Start Good Health in the New Year

The holiday season can really put a damper on your efforts to be healthy. It's hard to resist the chocolates, candy canes, cakes, and dinner-after-dinner of delicious spreads. A gentle, doctor-led detox program is a perfect way to kick start the new year and put you back on the right track after a holiday season loaded with indulgences.



A detox program is a cleansing and regenerating process that returns the body to its natural state of balance. Well Street's *Healthy Detox Program* is an unbiased, natural program designed to increase vitality, energy and optimize your health. The good habits developed during the program will help get you back on track with a healthy way of living and kick out the demotivating winter sluggishness.

Well Street's *Healthy Detox Program* and other programs are offered on-site at your workplace and are covered under most extended health and benefits plans.

Would you like to do a detox to kick start the new year? Let us know at info@wellstr.com.

Health Tip: Better Posture

Many people experience muscle tension or pain in their back, shoulders, and neck. A common cause is poor posture, which can be self-corrected with some time and dedication.

How To Keep A Straight Posture: Check yourself in the mirror - good posture should see a straight line downward from your ear to your shoulder to your hip to your knees to your ankles.

The Well Street Team
wishes you health, joy,
and success for 2013

