

10 healthy habits of people who rarely get sick



Staying healthy may seem like a task and a half, especially these days. If you're taking your vitamins and eating right, it should be enough, right? Wrong! We're sure you've why some of your friends seem to have such solid immune systems while you are sneezing and wheezing every turn of the season?

The answer is simple. People who rarely get sick often have tiny habits that contribute to better health, whether they know that or not. As compiled from The Healthy, here are 10 easy habits that may help you steer clear of flu, cold and even coronavirus.

1) DRINK ENOUGH WATER: We know what you're thinking – water will not flush out coronavirus! But it will

flush out other pesky germs from your system. "Stay hydrated. Take your weight in pounds, divide in half. That is approximately how many ounces of water you need a day," advises Renee Miranda, a family physician at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Centre.

2) GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP: Studies have found that our immune system suffers immensely when we don't get enough sleep, which means we're more prone to getting sick. "When we sleep, the body gets a chance to recuperate, repair and rejuvenate," says Dr Miranda, recommending around eight to nine hours of sleep.

3) DISINFECT PHONE AND WORK SURFACES: Yes, it sounds

like a bit high maintenance but trust us, it's really not. It takes up exactly a minute, or even under that, and requires as much as one disinfecting wipe per surface. Plus, most of us don't realise just how dirty our phone screen are. "Use bleach-free disinfecting wipes (or regular 70% alcohol wipes) to clean keyboards and other surfaces at the office," advises Dr Partha Nandi, a leading physician.

4) GET REGULAR FLU SHOTS: According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated every year. However, the vaccines may not protect against every strain of the virus and you may still get sick. But at least your symp-

toms will be milder.

5) GET ACTIVE AND GO OUTSIDE! "It's not uncommon that many of us are sitting in front of a computer screen, TV, or mobile phone for many hours of the day, and this promotes a sedentary lifestyle," says Dr Miranda. "Getting outside and breathing fresh air promotes a more active lifestyle, helps with circulation, provides stress relief and improves well-being."

6) DRINK WARM WATER: Hot drinks have always been a favourite when it comes to flus. They help improve mucus flow. Drinking warm water generally may help you too if you get sick often. "Drink warm water with raw honey added to it. You can also add some organic lemon juice or a cinna-

mon stick in it," suggests Dr Nandi.

7) TRY ESSENTIAL OILS: Although more research is needed in this regard, many people report essential oils to be super helpful with stress and sleep, which is backed up by the National Sleep Foundation in America.

8) DON'T GO OVERBOARD! Yes, there is such a thing as too much. "Exposure to all kinds of bacteria is how we build an immune system that is balanced and strong," says Dr Lipman, founder of Be Well in New York City. Overuse of products that kill both good and bad bugs, including antibacterial soaps and hand sanitisers and antibiotics, can have negative effects on our health as they limit the bacteria we are exposed to and kill off the good bugs

that are protecting us.

9) TAKE SUPPLEMENTS: A review in Open Forum Infectious Diseases found that those who took zinc within the first 24 hours of symptoms had shorter colds. "If you do take zinc, take it in the form of a syrup or lozenge, which allows it to stay in the throat where it can come into contact with a virus like a cold," says nutrition and fitness expert Erin Palinski-Wade.

10) CHANGE HAND TOWELS: Hand towels are more prone to germs because multiple people use them, and they might not be properly cleaning their hands. "Viral transmission can happen fairly quickly within the home," explains Dr Nandi. So if a family member is sick, changing sheets and pillow-

Duke researchers decontaminating N95 masks so doctors can reuse them



The N95 respirator masks that health care workers need to protect themselves while treating coronavirus patients are in dangerously short supply. So much so that physicians are wearing used respirators, risking infection

to care for patients. But now, Duke University researchers have developed a method to clean them so they can be safely re-worn.

Donations of respirator masks and other medical supplies needed at American hospitals coming from unlikely sources. Donations of respirator masks and other medical supplies needed at American hospitals coming from unlikely sources

The team at the Duke Regional Biocontainment Laboratory has already decontaminated hundreds of N95 respirators without damaging them so they can be re-worn several times. It could provide significant relief for hospitals running low on supply. The researchers published their decontaminating protocol so other hospitals can follow their lead. Using vaporized hydrogen peroxide, the researchers can kill microbial contaminants that lurk on the masks after they're worn. It's a method labs have used for decades to decontaminate equipment, said Wayne Thomann, director emeritus of the Duke Occupational & Environmental Safety Office. But the team never thought they'd need it for face masks.

How they do it Decontaminating requires special equipment in a closed facility to handle the hydrogen peroxide. But the process has already been carried out at Duke Health hospital complexes and can occur at other hospitals, too. The team can clean up to 500 masks in one cycle, which takes over four hours. They're working to expand that capacity. People around the country are sewing masks. And some hospitals, facing dire shortage, welcome them. People around the country are sewing masks. And some hospitals, facing dire shortage, welcome them. Previous research showed that the respirators could be decontaminated and re-worn between 30 to 50 times, but Thomann and the biocontainment lab crew are still evaluating how often they can be re-worn after treating coronavirus patients. "It will certainly be less than 30, and we will be conservative to ensure performance and safety," Thomann told CNN in an email. The masks tolerate the decontamination well, he said, so the process doesn't damage them or make them less effective. Before redistributing the respiratory masks, the team inspects them for tears to make sure they haven't lost their shape -- they must fit snugly and cover the entire mouth to be effective. N95 masks are essential to fight coronavirus. Personal protective equipment (PPE) like respirator masks, eye masks, gloves and gowns are essential for health care workers treating coronavirus patients. The virus is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets -- meaning spit, coughs and sneezes -- and any workers caring for those patients are routinely exposed to the virus. —Agencies

'Drop in blood donations could lead to tragedy'

KARACHI: The decline in blood donations amid the ongoing pandemic could develop into a human tragedy if it continues to progress this way, claimed haematologist Dr Saqib Ansari. Addressing a press conference at the Umair Sana Foundation, he said that there had been a drop in blood donations since the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country. "Donated blood is needed for those undergoing surgery and for thalassaemia patients, who need at least one bottle of blood a month to survive," he explained. "However, in the current situation, blood donations are steadily declining. To cope with this, we need to take emergency measures and donate large quantities of blood." Dr Ansari stated that if the situation persisted, large-scale losses of life could occur, adding that Pakistan needed 200,000 bottles of blood each month, half of which were required in Sindh alone. —APP

Study: Is it better to shower in the morning or at night?



Is there a right time to shower? Some people prefer to do it at night, washing away the dirt of the day so that they can hop into the sheets nice and clean. Others can't imagine starting the day without a thorough rinse. It's a wake-up call that rivals a steaming mug of strong coffee. But personal choices aside, is there any real benefit to showering at night or in the morning?

Turns out, nighttime washing has the edge when it comes to sleep benefits, reported Real Simple. "Showering or taking a bath prior to bedtime can help improve sleep quality and help you to fall asleep faster," said Dr Elizabeth Culnan of Rush University Medical Center in an interview with the health site. According to her, the key to showering efficiently is in the timing to promote good sleep. "Showering 1.5-2 hours before bed will warm your body and then also allow you to experience a more pronounced dip in body temperature, which promotes sleep."

As summer approaches, experts also recommend that a nighttime shower or bath is especially beneficial in warmer climates. "In hotter weather, it may be difficult to get the natural drop in body temperature needed for good sleep. That's where the shower or bath can help," said Mia Finkelson, MD and family physician. "This drop

in body temperature causes our body to slow down our heart rate, breathing rate and digestion — getting our bodies into the perfect rhythm for optimal sleep." Don't wait too long before bedtime to get clean, however, or you may be awake all night. Experts warned that a shower too close to bedtime will heat the body and not leave enough time for your body temperature to dip. Deepika Padukone shows us how to eat and exercise in self-isolation

Sad news for morning shower people. There are no real scientific advantages to morning showers, although health experts acknowledge that it may be therapeutic to some. Taking a shower as part of your daily morning routine may act as what psychologists call a zeitgeber, basically an external cue that provides information to the brain's clock that it's time to start the day.

But be careful with the heat of the water blasting from your shower head. A shower can invigorate your senses, as long as it's not too long or too hot. According to naturopathic experts, if you really love a hot shower, follow it up with a cold water blast. Ultimately, naturopathic doctors often recommend a thousands of years old practice called hydrotherapy, which includes alternating hot and cold temperatures to awaken the system, increase blood flow and support immunity. —Agencies



#Coronavirus: Five vitamins to help boost your immunity



Vitamin A



Vitamin C



Vitamin D

It's always a good idea to boost your immunity by eating a nutrient-based diet or by taking certain vitamins and minerals to help our bodies fight against disease.

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, it's now more important than ever to boost our immunity. What is the immune system? Basically, it comprises a network of cells, tissues, and organs working in tandem to protect our body.

To ensure a robust immune system, we should include essential nutrients. As compiled by Pink Villa, here are some vitamins and minerals which will not only amp up our immunity but may also protect us from virus', like Coronavirus.

Vitamin A: Vitamin A aids in the development of a type of white blood cell that produces antibodies. "Antibodies are proteins that bind to specific markers — known as antigens — on harmful

invaders, such as germs, viruses, or tumor cells," stated The Cancer Research Institute.

Antibodies mark harmful cells so that our immune system cells learn which cells to attack and destroy. Some of the best sources of Vitamin A are eggs, dark green leafy vegetables, oranges, sweet potatoes, carrot, salmon, mackerel, mango, watermelon, papaya and guava.

Vitamin C: Vitamin C is considered as one of the best immune

system boosters. It aids cellular functions that are needed in our bodies. Some of the best sources of Vitamin C include oranges, broccoli, tomatoes, spinach, bell peppers, strawberries, grapefruits and kale. Also, vitamin C as a tablet form is easily available from most supermarkets and pharmacies

Vitamin D: Vitamin D is another vital nutrient as it has the ability to fight off dangerous infections. Because of quarantin-

ing, Vitamin D creation is quite limited. Try sourcing vitamin D from foods such as salmon, cod liver oil, egg yolks, mushrooms and fortified foods.

Vitamin B6: Vitamin B6 is essential when it comes to biochemical reactions in the immune system. Chicken, salmon and tuna, green veggies and chickpeas are some rich sources of the mineral. Similarly, vitamin E is an excellent antioxidant that helps the body fight off viruses. Hazelnuts, sunflower seeds, almonds and peanuts are great options to enhance your vitamin E intake.

Zinc: Another important nutrient that boosts our immune system is zinc. Some of the best sources of zinc are seafood, chickpeas, eggs, pumpkin, oysters, legumes and sunflower



Vitamin B6