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Employee Assistance Program
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Winter Wellness Tips

Preventing the Flu and Colds

Often the best remedies for colds and flu are those that cost little or nothing. As we herald in the season of thanks and holiday celebrations, your friends at the State of New Hampshire Employee Assistance Program offer these healthy reminders to ensure that you take care of yourself.

Increase your fluid intake.
Water is just as useful as juice and doesn't overwhelm you with sugar. Warm or hot water/tea is soothing to the throat; adding lemon and honey can help with a cough.

Increase the amount of rest you get.
Your body heals itself better when it is rested. It may not be necessary to miss work, but go to bed early. On the other hand, a day off from work early may save you from several days off later.

You may feel like snuggling up next to the wood stove – don't!
The dry heat will likely make symptoms worse. Instead, heat water on the stove and pour it into a bowl. Put a towel over your head and the bowl and breathe in the steam through your nose and/or mouth. Be safe and make sure the steam is not too hot that it burns you. Then put a washcloth into the water, wring it out, fold it and place it over your forehead, eyes, and cheeks. Or, spend time in a steamy shower. These things will loosen the mucus in your sinuses and throat and make it easier for them to drain.

Keep the air in your home moist.
You can do this by putting a pan of water on your stove, or radiators if you have them. The water will evaporate into the air. If you use a vaporizer/humidifier, be sure to clean it often – at least once a week.

Wash your hands frequently.
If you don't have the flu, but someone in your home or at work does, washing your hands frequently may help prevent you from getting it.

Warning Signs

Acute symptoms of a cold or flu (runny nose, nasal congestion, muscle achiness, low grade fever) usually last 2-4 days, but complete healing may take 2-3 weeks. Watch for these signs:

- Fever about 101.6°F
- Shortness of breath
- Bloody sputum
- Significant chest pain
- Facial or dental pain
- Symptoms that persist longer than 10 days without some improvement

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."
Prevention is best: sleep, nutrition, and exercise. When your body is well rested, has proper nutrition, and is in good physical shape, it is better able to fight off infections and resist getting sick. So, remember to take time each day to care for your physical (and mental) health, so that you can keep your body healthy.