



Cold season is coming whether you're ready or not. Nothing will take away all the risk of getting a cold or flu but there are many things you can do to reduce your chances.

1. **Stock up your medicine cabinet.** (Consult with your physician before doing this.) Discard expired medicines and make a list of what you need to replace and replenish. Be sure to include fever and pain relief medicines, decongestants, antihistamines, and cough medicines. You may also want to buy nasal sprays and cough drops.
2. **Inventory your health supplies.** Focus on the basics, such as tissues, hand sanitizer, and antibacterial soaps. Be sure you have a good thermometer and fresh batteries if it needs them. A humidifier may also be useful.
3. **Fill your pantry with comfort foods and drinks.** A run to the grocery store once you're sick is not fun so think through it now and get what you need. Dehydration is the biggest reason you feel lousy so invest in plenty of drinks. Water is the best choice, but herbal teas can be soothing. Fruit juices can give you extra vitamin C. Pick out some favorite foods that are easy to make and eat such as ice pops and chicken soup.
4. **Wash your hands.** Washing your hands is easy. Start with warm water and antibacterial soap. Work the lather for 20 seconds, paying extra attention to fingernails and jewelry. Singing "Happy Birthday" twice is an excellent way to judge the time. Then rinse and dry your hands a disposable towel and use that same towel to turn off the faucet.
5. **Don't touch your face.** Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth because these are the areas where cold viruses gain entry into your system. The same germ that gives you a cold can cause viral pink eye. If you need to touch these areas, wash your hands before and after.
6. **Get your annual flu vaccine.** This is important because the flu spreads differently than colds and is very contagious. The vaccine can protect you against the most common strains of the flu and it changes each year based on predictions for the upcoming flu season. The vaccine is usually available by October.
7. **Adopt a healthy lifestyle.** Healthy living habits can boost your immune system thus preventing colds and flu so get plenty of rest. Eat a balanced diet and stay hydrated. Exercise regularly.
8. **Sanitize your household surfaces.** Viruses can survive on surfaces outside the human body; times range from seconds to a couple of days but cleaning household surfaces with disinfectants will kill cold and flu germs. An EPA registration number on the label will tell you if the product properly meets specifications for disinfectants.
9. **Prepare for sick days.** If you work, be sure to verify that you have several sick days available to use during the season. Do not hesitate to use your sick days

because even if you feel like you could work, your co-workers will appreciate you keeping your germs at home. Ask your employer about working from home if possible when you are sick. Enlist a neighbor to help you when you are sick.

10. **Stay away from sick people.** Avoid people who you know are sick and do not share items, such as utensils and cups. Limit contact with others as much as possible.

Sincerely,

Del Norte Healthcare District Board of Directors  
Elizabeth Austen, B.A.  
Michael Young  
Kevin Caldwell, M.D.  
Tonya Pearcey, R.N.  
David Mason

Source:

<https://www.healthgrades.com/right-care/cold-and-flu/10-ways-to-prepare-for-cold-and-flu-season>



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Del Norte County Healthcare District | 550 E. Washington Blvd., Ste 400, Crescent City, CA 95531

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