

TH TOP HEALTH®

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter.

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Latest Cold Care Advice

Colds are minor viral infections of the nose and throat that last about a week. As soon as you feel symptoms coming on, take steps to relieve them.

Over-the-counter medications: These include oral or nasal spray decongestants for stuffy nose, an analgesic pain reliever for headache or earache, and dextromethorphan for cough.

Note: Always read drug labels for proper use and to determine if the product is safe for children.

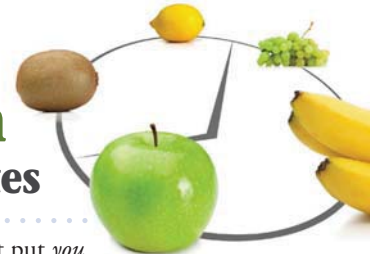
Non-drug remedies: To moisten and relieve airways, try a salt-water gargle for a sore throat or a cough, and a saline nasal spray for a stuffy nose. You can also try a clean humidifier or cool mist vaporizer, or breathe in steam from a bowl of hot water or shower.

Note: Antibiotics don't treat colds, unless a bacterial infection develops as a complication.

A better way to shorten your cold symptoms — go to bed and drink plenty of water. It may feel contrary to your busy lifestyle, but even one day of quiet bed rest lets your body direct more energy to fighting off germs. The only side effects are positive.



Better Health in Minutes



This year, why not put *you* at the top of your holiday gift list? Start now with some simple health challenges that fit easily into your routine. For example:

- **Practice deep breathing** several times a day to release your tension. Just slow down, sit and breathe for two minutes.
- **Brush your teeth** for two minutes twice a day; floss each night for healthy gums.
- **Whip up a morning fruit smoothie** with nonfat milk or yogurt and protein powder.
- **Avoid rushing.** Leave 10 minutes earlier.
- **Track your calories** in a journal if you're watching your weight.
- **Open doors and windows for 10 minutes** to create cross ventilation and freshen indoor air.
- **Spend 10 minutes a day** doing core exercises or stretching out your muscles.
- **Take a few minutes each week to plan balanced meals** and healthy snacks and shop in advance.

To change habits, start small and make steady progress. Success will come and encourage you in other areas.



When You Need Help for Your Headaches

Most head pain can be self-treated with pain medicine or a little relaxation. But what if your headache symptoms just aren't typical for you? Don't be reluctant to have your head pain checked out, as it can signal a serious condition.

See your provider without delay if:

- ▷ You've had your first severe or worst-ever headache.
- ▷ You've had a headache with neurological symptoms — blurred vision, numbness, poor balance or trouble speaking (signs of a stroke, a tumor, a migraine, encephalitis or other neurological problems).
- ▷ Your headache occurs with a fever, a stiff neck, persistent vomiting or confusion.
- ▷ Your headache follows a head injury or serious illness.

Make an appointment with your provider if:

- ▷ Your headaches occur several times a month and last for hours or days.

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Find a great way to donate your time and talent at VolunteerMatch.org, the Web's largest volunteer recruiting tool. You can help teach, build, rebuild, clean up, or support children, seniors or animals in need. Encourage your kids to get involved, and you'll all benefit from the spirit of giving.

"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live." — Jim Rohn

6 Places Germs Love

At home or work, in cars, coffee shops, airplanes, gyms and other public places, we pick up most germs from the objects we touch and share.

While no surface is ever germ-free, here are some common places that need frequent disinfecting:

1. **Kitchen sinks and drain plugs** are breeding grounds for bacteria from leftover food.
2. **Toilets** — be sure to close the lid before flushing (especially airplane toilets).
3. **Office desks** may harbor 400 times more germs than the average toilet seat, so clean with disinfecting wipes weekly.
4. **Remote controls** should be wiped down daily.
5. **Computer keyboards and phones** — clean surfaces with wipes weekly.
6. **Bathtubs, showers and drains** are also breeding grounds for bacteria, especially staphylococcus bacteria. Clean and disinfect them often.



To help guard against infection, always wash your hands before preparing or eating food, and after using the bathroom, handling garbage, blowing your nose or changing a diaper.

Wash your hands and fingernails for 20 seconds with warm water and lots of soapy lather. Thoroughly rinse and dry. And keep your hands away from your mouth, nose and eyes.

Avoid Post-Exercise Ache

The American College of Sports Medicine defines two basic kinds of exercise-related muscle soreness. Pain that occurs during exercise is called acute pain. It signals a problem with your exercise form or intensity. If you feel pain during exercise, stop the activity before you damage a muscle or joint. Acute soreness usually subsides after resting for several minutes.

Any type of activity that places unusual loads on a muscle may lead to delayed onset muscle soreness. It typically starts in 12 to 24 hours and produces the most pain 24 to 72 hours after your activity.

Activities that often cause delayed soreness include descending stairs or hills, jogging and weight lifting. For example, doing more muscle repetitions than you're ready for can cause soreness — which is why we are taught to add reps gradually. **Tip:** Progress slowly with a new activity. Gradually increase the duration, the frequency and the intensity of your exercise.

Delayed muscle soreness may last three to five days, but it actually creates a protective effect that reduces soreness in the involved muscle for weeks to come.



Healthful Holiday Appetizers



By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

From sit-down holiday dinners to impromptu parties, food is everywhere this month. Here are some tips for enjoying the festivities and the food — on the light side.

Appetizers are easy to overeat. Keep in mind that small bites of baked brie, pigs-in-a-blanket or bacon-wrapped scallops have 50 to 100 calories per piece. Six little bites can add up to 300 to 600 calories. Instead, just eat two of the higher-calorie options.

Stick with shrimp in cocktail sauce (15 calories per shrimp) or raw vegetable sticks. Skip deep-fried or cheese-covered bites. Opt for vegetables or fruit as main ingredients.

From traditional spinach dip to hummus, dips add calories, fat and sodium to your evening's meal. Enjoy your appetizers, but dip sparingly. A few teaspoons of dip and a few drops of a salty condiment are all you need.

Beverage calories count too. Try alternating calorie-filled beverages with sparkling water (0 calories). Several glasses of regular soft drinks and party punch can add up to hundreds of extra calories.

Seasonal Affective Disorder, also known as SAD, peaks this time of year. If you feel down and out, sleep all day or seem to have depression this time of year, then you might just have it. Antidepressants work, but so do special lights called SAD lights. Sitting in front of the light for 20 minutes a day while you're watching TV or working on the computer can help your mood and give you increased energy. — Zorba Paster, MD



Help for Your Headaches ... *(continued)*

- ▷ Your headaches have become more frequent or severe.
- ▷ Your headaches interfere with your normal work and activities.
- ▷ Your pattern of headaches started after age 50.

Before meeting with your provider, write a summary of your headache pattern and symptoms. Treatment works best when you're an active member of your health care team.



Smart moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/dec12tools. **Next Month: Strength Training for Life**