

## Dr. Lisa Hark Says "simple Lifestyle Changes Benefit Immune System"

The good news is there are simple ways to incorporate healthy habits every day to help the body defend itself during cold and flu season.

- **Get a Shot.** 36,000 people die annually from the flu, but only 33 percent reported getting an annual flu shot during the months of October and November, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Hark urges adults who never get flu shots to visit a grocery store or health clinic now to get the recommended annual flu shot.
- **Strengthen Your Body's Defense.** Sixty-five percent of the Americans surveyed drink 100 percent orange juice as soon as they feel cold and flu symptoms. This is a great way to get the right mix of nutrients and vitamins the body needs to help sustain the immune system to help it fight the common cold. In addition, 64 percent report that they try to prevent long-term disease by eating a balanced diet of fruits and vegetables. Consuming a nutrient-rich diet all year round may help keep your body strong.
- **Get Active.** According to "The Stay Well Report," 53 percent of adults choose to stay indoors when they feel cold and flu symptoms coming on. However, it is important to get some fresh air because the body is more vulnerable to cold and flu viruses if constantly indoors. Also, studies show that people who frequently exercise have less severe symptoms of the cold and flu and recover more quickly than those who do not exercise. Aerobic exercise such as bicycling, jogging and swimming increase the body's natural ability to kill virus-causing cells, so get moving and help strengthen your body's immune system.
- **Stay Clean.** Germs are everywhere and once they're on our hands, it only takes a moment to spread them to the eyes, nose or mouth. Fortunately, 73 percent report washing hands more frequently and disinfecting surrounding surfaces such as door knobs, phones, keyboards and refrigerator door handles, typical breeding grounds for germs.
- **Change Your Toothbrush.** Dental experts suggest changing your toothbrush every three months. In addition, it is important to change toothbrushes after recovering from the cold and flu, as toothbrushes hold onto bacteria and may cause reinfection.

While there's no single measure to prevent sickness, the secret to a strong immune system may already be in the refrigerator. I always advise clients to drink a glass of 100 percent orange juice each day and eat a well-balanced diet because they offer many vitamins and minerals essential for a healthy immune system.

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### About the Author

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