



AVIATION MEDICAL BULLETIN™

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ARE YOU MAKING YOUR COLD WORSE?

A lot of what we believe about the common cold is myth. No, you won't get a cold because you went outside with a wet head or slept in a drafty room. But here's what is true. When you're sick, some common mistakes can make your cold symptoms worse -- or prevent you from getting better.

If you're feeling crummy and stuffed up, here are things that could make your cold worse.

Pretending you're not sick. This never works. You can't ignore a cold. When you get sick, you need to take care of yourself. Your body needs extra energy when it's fighting an infection. If you try to push through a cold, especially if you have a fever, you'll exhaust yourself. That could make your cold worse.

Not sleeping enough. Getting enough sleep is key for a healthy immune system. One study found that sleeping less than 7 hours a night almost triples your risk of getting a cold in the first place. If your cold symptoms keep you up at night, try to go to bed earlier or take naps during the day. You need extra rest, however you get it.

Getting stressed. It turns out that stress can make you more likely to get a cold. Over time, high levels of stress hormones can stop your immune system from working normally. The result: More sick days.

Drinking too little. You need to drink a lot of fluid when you're sick. Why? Fluids will help thin your mucus, making your sinuses drain better. Just about any fluid will help. Water, juice, hot tea, and soup are all good. Contrary to what you've heard, even milk is OK -- the notion that it causes mucus build-up is a myth.

Drinking alcohol. Too much alcohol can leave you dehydrated and worsen cold symptoms such as congestion. It can also suppress your immune system and

- potentially -- interact with cold medications you're taking. Until you're feeling better, it's best to lay off the booze.

Overusing decongestant sprays. Be careful with nasal decongestant sprays. They may work well at first. But if you use them for more than three days, your stuffy nose will get worse when you stop.

Smoking. Smokers get more colds than nonsmokers. They also get worse colds that last longer. Smoking damages cells in the lungs, making it harder for you to fight off a cold. If you're sick with a cold, don't smoke -- and don't let anyone around you smoke either.

Source: Familydoctor.org

MORE OVERWEIGHT KIDS

The number of overweight and obese children has more than doubled in the last 20 years. The primary reason given: watching too much TV (and getting too little physical activity).

Source: Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine

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PILATES

It's pronounced puh-LAH-tees, and it's become one of the most popular forms of exercise. The exercise regimen developed by German-born fitness guru Joseph H. Pilates (1880-1967) has no pounding as in aerobics, but rather focuses on the body's "powerhouse" stomach, hips, lower back and buttocks.

According to Brook Siler, a certified Pilates instructor, "You'll notice a change in 10 exercise sessions; after 30 sessions, you'll feel as if you have a whole new body."

Pilates doesn't require machines. You do all the exercises on a simple floor mat. (Think yoga but with more movement and greater intensity.) Those who do it swear by it for toning weak muscles, improving posture and flexibility.

Source: Bottom Line Health

HOW TO RAISE HDL

High density lipoprotein cholesterol acts like a vacuum cleaner in the bloodstream sucking up bad LDL cholesterol and dispensing with it. While HDL levels are genetic, there are some things you can do to give your HDL a boost:

- **Exercise more.** Aerobic exercise increases HDL levels. The longer and harder you exercise, the greater the benefit.
- **Lose weight if you're overweight.** This is especially important if you are "apple" shaped (where fat accumulates around the waistline).
- **Don't smoke.** Smoking lowers HDL by an average of 5 points. Even secondhand smoke can lower HDL.
- **Consider a drink a day.** Several studies indicate that alcohol in moderation can boost HDL. (Note alcohol can raise the level of triglycerides in the bloodstream.)
- **Consider medication.** If your HDL is low, talk to your doctor about drugs that can lower LDL cholesterol and raise HDL.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter

HEALTH MYTHS DEBUNKED

Eggs Are Bad for Your Heart

Omelet lovers, rejoice. Eating an egg or two a day doesn't raise the risk of heart disease in healthy people. Yes, the yolks have cholesterol, but for most of us, the amount found in any one food isn't as bad for you as the mix of fats from everything you eat. What's more, eggs have nutrients, like omega-3s, that may lower the risk of heart disease.

Antiperspirant Causes Breast Cancer

Don't sweat it! Some scientists think the chemicals found in antiperspirants and deodorants can be absorbed through your underarm. The idea is they end up in breast tissue and make tumors more likely. But the National Cancer

Institute says there's no evidence connecting either product with breast cancer.

Being Cold Gives You a Cold

No matter what your grandma might've told you, spending too much time in the cold air doesn't make you sick. One study found that healthy men who spent several hours in temperatures just above freezing had an increase in healthy, virus-fighting activity in their immune systems. In fact, you're more likely to get sick indoors, where germs are easily passed.

You Need a Daily Multivitamin

You may have heard that a multivitamin can make up for nutrients that aren't in your diet. Researchers don't all agree on that point. But if your doctor tells you to take vitamin, do it. And if you're pregnant, you need to take folic acid to lower the risk of birth defects. Still, the best way to get your nutrients is to eat a diet filled with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and healthy oils.

Green Mucus Means Infection

The contents of your tissue can't take the place of a lab test. Studies show that green or yellow mucus is slightly more common in certain bacterial infections. But it's not a sure sign that you have one or that you need antibiotics. A sinus infection can cause clear mucus, and a common cold can turn it green.

A Toilet Seat Can Make You Sick

Don't stress if you can't cover the seat. Toilet seats are usually pretty clean -- it's bathroom doors, door handles, and floors that tend to be covered with bugs like E. coli, norovirus (a.k.a. "stomach flu"), and the flu. Cover your hand with a paper towel before you touch doors or handles, and use hand sanitizer or wash afterward.

Cracking Joints Causes Arthritis

The sound might annoy people around you, but that's about all the harm it does. You may think bones or joints rub together to cause the noise, but that's not so. It results from a gas bubble that forms between the bones and "pops." If you enjoy doing it, keep on. Studies show it doesn't cause or play a role in arthritis. If you feel regular or severe pain when you do it, see your doctor.

Source: Harvard Health Letter

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THE LEAST AMOUNT OF EXERCISE

What’s the least amount of exercise you can do and show some physiological benefits? The American College of Sports Medicine says it takes a minimum of 10 minutes of exercise twice a week at an intensity level of 40 to 50 percent of your maximum. A brisk walk will do.

Source: Runner’s World

STRESS AND HEART DISEASE

People who feel highly “stressed” are at increased risk for coronary heart disease. Those who scored high on questions like “What is the level of stress in your daily life” and “How often do you feel stressed?” were 27 percent more likely to be diagnosed or hospitalized with heart disease.

High perceived stress is as bad for the heart as a 50-point increase in LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, the researchers estimated. While objective measures of “stress” have consistently been linked to heart conditions, this study shows that how people perceive and handle the stress matters, too.

Source: American Journal of Cardiology

FITNESS TEST

How fit are you? Here is a one-mile-walk test to help you determine your cardiovascular fitness level.

See how long it takes you to walk a mile. Find a quarter-mile that you can do 4 laps on or locate a marked trail and give it a try. After warming up by stretching and walking, see how fast—without exhausting yourself—you can cover the distance walking (not jogging). Record your time in minutes and seconds and then compare your results to the times in the table below. (This test adapted from the Rockport Fitness Walking Test.)

Age	Super Fit	Athlete	Average	Need Work
20-29	<13:30	13:31-15:00	15:01-17:00	>17:01
30-39	<14:00	14:01-16:00	16:01-18:00	>18:01
40+	<14:30	14:31-17:59	18:00-19:00	>19:01

Source: Health&FitnessTips.com

WAYS TO REST WITH A COLD

Use a Humidifier to Help Breathe Easier

Use a humidifier or vaporizer all night to release moisture into the air. Steam can loosen congestion and moisturize your nasal passages. Besides helping you breathe easier, moist air can soothe irritated tissues in your nose and throat. This may relieve sore throat pain as well. Be sure

to clean and disinfect your humidifier or vaporizer regularly to get rid of germs.

Shower Before Bed

When you have a cold, get the benefits of steam from a hot shower to make breathing more comfortable. You can also run the shower and sit in the steamy bathroom with the door shut, bend over a sink filled with running hot water, or put a warm compress over your sinuses.

Choose Medicines Wisely

Cold medicines combine various ingredients to treat symptoms like congestion, runny nose, cough, fever, and aches. Check the ingredients carefully and choose the medicine that most closely matches your symptoms. That way you won't accidentally take two drugs with the same ingredient. Medicines with decongestants may keep you awake. Some antihistamines, on the other hand, make most people drowsy.

Decongestant Nasal Spray May Help

When you can't get any air in your nose, a decongestant nasal spray may help open up nasal passages and ease congestion. But beware -- using decongestant sprays for more than three days in a row can end up making congestion worse.

Soothe a Sore Throat

For quick relief of sore throat pain, gargling with warm salt water before going to bed may be soothing. There are also over-the-counter lozenges, throat sprays, and pain relievers that may help. If you have a severe sore throat and a fever for more than two days, check with your doctor -- especially if you don't have typical cold symptoms like congestion and sneezing. It could be due to a strep infection.

Nasal Strips May Provide Relief

Some people try nasal strips for relief from congestion while they sleep. They're intended to go across the bridge of your nose to perhaps help stretch and open the nasal passages. A strip won't break up mucus but it may allow more space for some airflow.

Raise the Head of Your Bed

You may have heard that your sinuses will drain more easily if you prop up your head on many pillows. Doctors say this isn't a good idea, because it bends the neck unnaturally and can make breathing more difficult. What works better is raising the head of the bed. Try putting large books under the legs of your headboard and securing them. This creates a gentler, more natural incline.

Source: U. C. Berkeley Wellness Letter

DECADES OF WEIGHT GAIN

The average daily calorie intake of American adults increased by about 500 calories between the early 1970s and the early 2000s, and by 350 calories for children. That is more than enough to explain the 19 pound average weight gain in adults and 9 pound gain in kids during this period,

Source: The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition

PICKLES

How healthy are pickles?

Well, almost anything can be turned into a pickle—green tomatoes, cucumbers, cauliflower, peppers, beets, onions, even peaches.

Pickling occurs when a food is steeped in a preservative, such as brine or vinegar. In general, a pickled food will lose some of its water-soluble vitamins (like the B vitamins and C). Pickling does not destroy the minerals or the fiber.

Pickles of the dill variety are high in sodium. A five-ounce dill pickle has about 1,750 milligrams of sodium—close to the maximum recommended daily amount of 2,400 milligrams. Sweet pickles, on the other hand, are lower in salt but higher in calories. On a positive note, pickles are fat-free.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter

FITNESS TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

Take the First Step

Maybe you're not going to be a superstar athlete. But you can still set a big fitness goal for yourself, even if you've never tried a sport before. Examples of fitness goals could be a century ride (a 100-mile bike ride in less than a day). Or you could train for a triathlon (a series of three endurance events, often swimming, cycling, and running), or join a sports league.

Start With Small Goals

You might have a big goal you want to reach one day, like a marathon. The best way to get there is to set a series of smaller goals that lead to your big goal. For example, before you sign up for a marathon, set goals to do a few 5K races first. And before that, work up to running a mile. Fitness apps can help you keep track of each great thing you do on your way to your big goal.

Mix Things Up

You may get bored doing the same workout every day. And after you do the same activity all the time for 6 to 8 weeks, your muscles adapt to it. You burn fewer calories and build less muscle. Try interval training: Step up your

pace for a minute, then slow down, and repeat.

Get Your Doctor's OK

If you're not active now, talk to your doctor before you start exercising if you're over 45 (men) or 55 (women). It's also a good idea to get a doctor's OK if you have a health problem or take regular medication. To avoid injuries and burnout, start working out slowly: 3 days a week for 10-15 minutes. Then gradually add time and intensity.

Drink Enough Water

Unless your workout is really long or tough, you don't need a special sports drink with electrolytes. Water works just fine. Drink plenty: If you're dehydrated, your muscles may cramp, and you raise your risk of heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Two hours before you exercise, drink about 2 to 3 cups of water. During your routine, drink about 1 cup every 10-20 minutes. Keep drinking after you're done exercising, too.

Do Strength Training

Even if your goal -- a marathon, for example -- might center on cardio, you should practice strength or resistance training, too. Strong muscles burn more calories, help prevent injuries, and build stronger bones. Work muscles on weight machines, with hand-held equipment like free weights, kettlebells, or resistance bands, or by doing exercises like push-ups. Rest each muscle group, such as biceps and triceps, at least 2 days between strength workouts.

YOUR GUIDE TO OVER-THE-COUNTER PAIN RELIEF

Risks Depend on the Drug and Your Health

Got sore muscles or a raging headache? Before you reach for that bottle in the medicine cabinet for pain relief, know what you're taking -- and what side effects it might cause. Always read the label and follow directions before taking any medication.

OTC Pain Reliever Types

Pain relievers come in two main varieties. Acetaminophen (Panadol, Tylenol) and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs -- better known as NSAIDs -- both help to relieve pain and reduce fever. NSAIDs include ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), aspirin, and naproxen sodium (Aleve). Pain relievers come in many forms, including: tablets, caplets, gels, and liquids.

Age Can Affect Pain Reliever Safety

Years ago, parents often gave their children baby aspirin for fevers and illness. Now that doctors know more about Reye's syndrome -- a rare but serious condition that affects

the brain, kidneys, and liver -- aspirin is a no-no for children and teens during times of illness. Sick kids can

safely take ibuprofen and acetaminophen, as long as the dosage is right for their age and weight. Seniors also should use caution when taking OTC pain relievers, because older adults are more likely to develop side effects.

Drinks and Pain Relievers

Alcohol and OTC pain relievers can be a dangerous combination. Many drugs -- including pain relievers -- carry warnings about drinking alcohol if you are taking medication. Always read the label and follow instructions.

Pain Relievers Affect Blood Pressure

Some OTC pain relievers may interact with some high blood pressure medications or can increase blood pressure in people not previously diagnosed with this condition. If you take prescription high blood pressure drugs, regularly monitor your blood pressure and consult your doctor to find out what OTC pain medication would be best for you.

Stomachs Can Be Sensitive

Some NSAID pain relievers, such as ibuprofen and naproxen sodium, can be tough on your gut. They can irritate the lining of the stomach, leading to ulcers and bleeding, or aggravate ulcers you already have. If you have to use an NSAID pain reliever, help protect your stomach by taking the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time and take them with food. If you need an NSAID daily for more than a week, check with your doctor.

How Healthy Is Your Heart?

OTC pain relievers can be a double-edged sword for people with heart problems. Daily low-dose aspirin can help ward off blood clots that can lead to a stroke or heart attack. On the other hand, long-term non-aspirin NSAID use, especially at high doses, can interfere with the blood-thinning effect of aspirin. It can also boost blood pressure and increase the risk of heart attack or stroke. People with heart disease or high blood pressure should check with their doctor before taking NSAIDs. They are generally not recommended for people with kidney disease, heart failure, or cirrhosis.

Read Labels to Know Your Medicine

Combination over-the-counter products -- such as cold and flu remedies -- often contain several drugs. To avoid taking too much, look at the list of active ingredients. For example, if a medicine contains acetaminophen, you'll

know to avoid taking more separately. Reading labels can also help you avoid drugs you're allergic to.

Source: Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter

BENEFITS OF LOW DOSE ASPIRIN

Long-term use of low-dose aspirin reduces the risk of colon cancer. In a study, middle-aged women who took 100 milligrams of aspirin (a little more than a standard "baby" aspirin) every other day for at least 10 years were 20 percent less likely to develop colon cancer than those taking a placebo. Many studies, mostly involving men, have suggested that aspirin helps prevent colon cancer.

Daily aspirin use might have been even more beneficial. There was an increase in gastrointestinal bleeding and ulcers in the aspirin group, so aspirin can't be recommended for everyone. But those at high risk for colon cancer because of family history or prior polyps should discuss aspirin therapy with their health care providers.

Source: The Annals of Internal Medicine

BLAME IT ON THE DOG

Is it okay to hold in intestinal gas? Not surprisingly, there aren't any studies comparing people who hold in gas with those who don't, so we can't give an evidence-based answer. But a team of physicians recently voiced their opinion. They specifically wrote about flatulence on airplanes, where it occurs frequently since gas expands at higher altitude and cabins are pressurized to about 8,000 feet. Plus, the enclosed space and close proximity of passengers makes passing gas more, well, obvious there.

Holding in gas can cause bloating, indigestion, heartburn, and sometimes even pain, they noted. Intestinal distension resulting from trapped gas may also increase blood pressure and heart rate. Then there's the mental stress of trying to keep the gas from escaping.

The doctors' advice: Just let it go. Keep in mind that it's not always possible to hold in gas anyway. If you fall asleep—on a plane or perhaps at the movies—the gas escapes on its own. It can also let loose if you sneeze or cough. And some people may just have too much gas to hold in. Perhaps that as the case with the government employee who was in the news in 2012 when he was formally reprimanded for having uncontrolled and excessive flatulence that made the workplace "intolerable."

Everyone produces gas—½ to 2 pints a day, on average—it's a necessary part of digestion. Eventually, it will exit the body, whether you are aware of it or not. Still, if you feel self-conscious, it's okay to hold it in until you find a

“safe” place to release it. If you have a serious flatulence issue, however, talk to your health care provider to figure out the cause and how to control it.

Source: The New Zealand Medical Journal.

DOES EATING AFTER 8 P.M. CAUSE WEIGHT GAIN?

In theory, weight control is a simple matter of balancing energy intake (the amount of calories supplied by food) with energy output. But when it comes to weight control, nothing is simple. Here's what we know.

When you eat doesn't matter -- it's how much you eat and exercise that makes the difference. If you take in more calories than you need, your body will store them as fat no matter what time you eat. That said, here are some good reasons to avoid eating just before bedtime:

- The foods people tend to eat at night are high-fat, high-calorie foods such as ice cream, chips, cookies, and other snack foods.
- Eating spicy, fatty, or high-acid foods during the three hours before lying down can contribute to heartburn, in which stomach contents rise up into the esophagus and cause burning pain. If you're prone to heartburn, avoid evening eating, and if you must eat, steer clear of irritating foods such as citrus fruits, chocolate, spicy foods, high-fat foods, and drinks that contain alcohol or caffeine.
- If you snack while watching TV, it's easy to overeat, because you're distracted (and most of the commercials are encouraging you to eat more!). You plan to eat just a couple of chips, and before you know it, you've gobbled up a whole bag.

If you are hungry in the evening, choose a small, filling snack such as an apple or a half serving of whole-grain cereal with milk. And be sure to include before-bed snacking in your daily calorie plan -- if you can't sleep without a bite to eat, save some calories from earlier in the day.

Source: Johns Hopkins Health Alerts

KEEP MOVING

“Working out for six months is the equivalent of turning the clock back as much as 30 years,” say researchers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Six months of moderately intense training reversed the decline in cardiovascular fitness that occurs with aging, even in those who had not exercised in 20 years.

Source: Health Radar

RARE AND MEDIUM SAFER

According to the National Cancer Institute eating red meat cooked well done triples the risk of developing colon cancer compared to meat cooked rare or medium.

Source: The Fitness Bulletin

A SYNDROME WE LIVE WITHOUT?

Originally given the mysterious name Syndrome X, metabolic syndrome was first described more than 30 years ago. It is a cluster of related cardiovascular risk factors that includes excessive abdominal fat, high blood pressure and elevated blood sugar. About one-third of American adults have metabolic syndrome.

The key elements, maybe

Definitions vary, but according to a common one, you have metabolic syndrome if you develop three or more of the following:

- Obesity, especially in the abdomen: a waist circumference of more than 40 inches for a man, 35 inches for a woman.
- Low HDL (“good” cholesterol): below 40 for a man, below 45 for a woman.
- High triglycerides (fats in the blood): 150 or above on a fasting test.
- Elevated blood pressure: 130/85 or above.
- Elevated blood sugar: 100 or more on a fasting blood glucose test. Blood sugar greater than 125 indicates diabetes, while levels between 100 and 125 indicate increased risk for developing diabetes.

Treat the components, forget the syndrome

In practical terms, it may not matter whether metabolic syndrome is a distinct condition or not. There's no magic pill for it. If your doctor says you have it, you simply have to treat the individual risk factors. Here are the key steps:

- ✓ **Lose weight if you're overweight.** It's essential to reduce your calorie intake and/or burn more calories via physical activity. Losing just 10 to 20 pounds can restore insulin sensitivity and help control blood sugar and blood pressure.
- ✓ **Choose healthy carbohydrates.** Cut down on sugary foods and refined-grain products such as white bread and starchy snack foods. Instead, eat more high-fiber foods—that is, vegetables, beans, whole grains and fruits. Fiber slows the digestion

of the carbohydrates, so there's less effect on insulin and blood sugar. Limit sodas and other sugary drinks; a recent study in *Diabetes Care* linked them to the components of metabolic syndrome.

- ✓ **Cut down on sodium.** That will lower blood pressure in sodium-sensitive people.
- ✓ **Limit alcohol if your triglyceride level is high,** or avoid it altogether. Though it can modestly raise HDL ("good") cholesterol, alcohol can boost triglycerides.

And keep in mind: Exercising regularly can't be overemphasized. Even when it doesn't produce weight loss, it can increase insulin sensitivity and have cardiovascular benefits.

Source: Archives of Internal Medicine

MOST AND LEAST OBESE

States with the highest and lowest obesity rates:

Lowest

1. Colorado
2. (tie) Connecticut, Massachusetts
4. Rhode Island
5. (tie) Hawaii, Utah
7. Vermont
8. New Jersey
9. (tie) California, Montana

Highest

1. Mississippi
2. Alabama
3. West Virginia
4. Tennessee
5. Oklahoma
6. South Carolina
7. Kentucky
8. (tie) Arkansas, Michigan, North Carolina

Source: America's Health Rankings

22% OF US CALORIES FROM BEVERAGES – BUT WHO'S COUNTING

Americans drink almost a quarter of our daily calories. And when we consume sweetened, high-calorie beverages, adds a Penn State study of mealtime habits, we don't compensate by cutting back on the calories from solid food. The report found that calories from beverages make up 22% of the total energy intake in the average US diet. Half of the added sugar that Americans consume comes from beverages.

But many people don't "count" liquid calories—just those from foods they eat, warns dietitian Carolyn O'Neil, RD. "People just may not be aware of how these calories are sneaking into their diet.... and not understanding what an impact it has on body weight."

In a typical day the average American consumes:

- 38 ounces of water
- 17.5 ounces of sugar-sweetened beverages such as soft drinks (which alone added up to 12 ounces daily) and teas
- 8.9 ounces of coffee (which may also be sweetened)
- 7.5 ounces of milk.

Soft drinks were found to be the source of 36% of all added sugars and 6.4% of total calories in the American diet. Nearly half of all Americans drink at least one sugary soft drink on any given day.

Source: Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter

AVOIDING FRESHMAN WEIGHT GAIN

Tips for helping new college students stay trim:

- ◆ Eat breakfast, and plan how and where to eat healthy food between classes.
- ◆ Stock up on fruits and vegetables so you have healthy foods to snack on. This will help you avoid high-calorie convenience foods when studying late.
- ◆ Drink lots of water, and choose sugar-free drinks and low-fat or fat-free milk.
- ◆ Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit, one-quarter with whole grains, and one-quarter with lean protein.
- ◆ Keep a food diary.
- ◆ Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day. Many freshman who were formerly active turn into campus couch potatoes.

Campus gatherings often include alcohol, which has lots of calories and can trigger you to eat more, because it lowers your resistance to temptation.

Source: Duke Diet and Fitness Center, Duke University

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