



Healthy habits to beat the flu

Eating well, exercising regularly and getting enough sleep are some of your best defences against the flu.



Strong immunity begins with nutrition

A well-nourished immune system is better able to fight off the flu. Fuel your immune system with plenty of phytochemicals (plant chemicals) antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin C (kiwi and citrus fruits), iron (red meat and leafy greens), zinc (red meat, shellfish and sunflower seeds), calcium (dairy, tahini and leafy greens), selenium (brazil nuts), vitamin A (carrots) and vitamin E (avocados and almonds).



Exercise regularly

Every time you walk or run, you are boosting your body's immunity; the natural defense against viruses. A daily 30-minute walk, or three 10-minute walks, is all you need. Exercise also increases the number of virus-killing cells in your body. It may not prevent all viruses, but it can speed up recovery and reduce the intensity of symptoms. Exercise also helps you de-stress which is an important part of staying healthy.



Get plenty of sleep

Getting plenty of sleep helps boost the function of your immune system. You should aim to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep a night. People who sleep less than 7 hours a night are nearly three times more likely to catch a cold than those getting more than 8 hours a night. Just resting and relaxing is also important.



Reduce stress

Some stress is good, but it is important to know your limits and when to take a break and relax. Too much stress impairs the immune system and therefore increases susceptibility to colds and flu.



Quit smoking

Smokers are more prone to colds and flu than non-smokers, and experience more severe and frequent colds.



Wash your hands

The humble hand wash is an excellent way to prevent developing the flu as well as stopping the spread of germs in its tracks. Travel-sized antibacterial lotions are useful 'on the go', but when possible good old fashioned soap and water is preferable.

Dental Health Week

Every year around 63,000 Australians need to be hospitalised for preventable and treatable oral conditions.

Dental health week, run by the Australian Dental Association during the first week in August, aims to educate Australians about the importance of maintaining good oral health.

Oral health means the health of our mouths. You can maintain good oral and dental health throughout adulthood by adopting good oral hygiene practices and by having a healthy diet.

Common oral health conditions in adults include tooth decay, gum disease, tooth wear, dry mouth and tooth sensitivity. Decay in adults can be common around fillings and between teeth.

Keeping your mouth healthy is also important for maintaining good general health and wellbeing. An unhealthy mouth can increase your risk of diabetes, heart disease, and pneumonia.

Tips to maintain good oral hygiene include:

- ▶ Brush your teeth twice daily using a soft toothbrush
- ▶ Use fluoride toothpaste
- ▶ Floss daily
- ▶ Eat a healthy diet and limit snacks and drinks high in sugar
- ▶ Quit tobacco use
- ▶ Limit your alcohol consumption
- ▶ Wear a mouthguard when engaging in contact sports
- ▶ Visit your dentist regularly



Simple, healthy banana bread

Café-style banana breads are generally high in refined white flour, sugar and saturated fats. Next time you get a craving for banana bread, try this recipe instead. Bananas are a great source of potassium, an essential mineral for maintaining normal blood pressure and heart function. They add moisture and sweetness, which means you can reduce the amount of sweetener and oil used.

Ingredients:

Serves 8

- ▶ 150 g (5 oz) butter, cubed (or coconut oil)
- ▶ 3 ripe bananas, mashed
- ▶ 2 eggs
- ▶ 2 cups blanched almond meal
- ▶ ¾ cup walnuts, chopped and 2 tbs extra
- ▶ 1 tsp 100% vanilla extract
- ▶ 1 tsp baking powder

Method:

- ▶ Preheat oven to 180°C and line a 20cm x 10cm (8 x 4 inch) loaf tin with baking paper.
- ▶ Cream the butter, eggs and vanilla.
- ▶ In a large bowl, mix the almond meal, walnuts and baking powder.
- ▶ Add the butter mixture and mashed bananas and stir until combined.
- ▶ Transfer mixture to prepared tin, sprinkle with extra walnuts and place in the oven for 50 minutes or until it springs back when you lightly touch the top.
- ▶ Allow to cool before you turn out, slice and serve.



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