

all-natural winter health



EVERYTHING YOUR FAMILY NEEDS TO KICK A COLD, FIGHT A FLU, AND GENERALLY STAY WELL THIS SEASON. BY MARYGRACE TAYLOR

eat your vitamins

Your family's schedule is already packed, and once you add the holiday bustle to the mix, stress levels can go through the roof. This increased stress can weaken immune systems, making your clan more likely to get sick this winter, says nutritionist Keri Glassman, author of the upcoming book, *The O2 Diet*. How can you stop illness in its tracks? Make sure you and your kids get enough of these essential immunity-boosting nutrients:

	how much kids need	where you'll find it
Vitamin C	Age 4 and under: 40 mg, Age 5 and up: 60mg	Kiwi fruit, broccoli, red bell pepper, citrus fruits
Vitamin E	Age 4 and under: 10 IU, Age 5 and up: 30 IU	Whole grains, green leafy vegetables, nuts, and seeds
Selenium	Age 3 and under: 20 micrograms, Age 4-8: 30 micrograms, Age 9-13: 40 micrograms, Age 14 and up: 55 micrograms	Brazil nuts, tuna, turkey, oatmeal
Zinc	Age 3 and under: 3 mg, Age 4-8: 5mg, Age 9-13: 8 mg, Girls age 14 and up: 9mg, Boys age 14 and up: 11mg,	Oysters, beef, poultry, beans, nuts

herbal helpers

Why head for the pharmacy when you can go straight to the source? Many pharmaceuticals are derived from super-healthy herbs that can give your family a natural immune-system boost. Here, some of our favorites:

- **Elderberry syrup** is great to keep on hand, says master herbalist Jessie Hawkins, author of *The Handbook of Vintage Remedies*. "It's safe to

take regularly for immune system support," she says. "Plus, kids don't mind the taste, which is similar to blueberry." Give your kids a teaspoon of the syrup daily for cold prevention, or one teaspoon every four hours when they're sick, unless the manufacturer's directions state otherwise.

- To beat congestion, put a few drops of **eucalyptus essential oil**,



a natural anti-inflammatory, in a pot of boiling water, then have your child inhale the vapors, suggests herbalist Christopher Hobbs. For best results, put a towel over her head to create a steam tent.

● Remember how good it felt when your mom rubbed ointment on your nose and chest when you were a kid? Use **essential peppermint oil** to get the same results, only without the mess. Put a tiny dab under your child's nose or around the edges of her nostrils—just tell her not to touch her eyes, and be sure to wash your hands after (if you get the stuff in your eyes, it'll sting).

● Hawkins recommends **slippery elm bark** (available in tablet form) for sore or scratchy throats. Slippery bark contains mucilage, which

becomes a slick gel when it comes in contact with saliva: Have your kid dissolve a tablet in her mouth to coat her throat.

● Some people swear by **echinacea**, claiming it shortens the duration and reduces symptoms of a cold or flu. Although the herb's effectiveness hasn't been proven, it's perfectly safe to try. Hobbs suggests drinking echinacea tea several times daily at the first sign of a cold (five to ten drops of echinacea mixed with tea for kids six months to two years, ten to 20 drops for kids ages three to

six, 20 to 30 drops for kids seven to ten, 30 to 40 drops for kids 11 to 14, and 40 drops for older kids).

Before you turn to herbs as remedies, Hawkins suggests talking to a master herbalist. "If you're unsure of the herb, or you're pregnant or breastfeeding, wait until you consult with a professional," she says. If your kids do get

sick and you want to use a

homeopathic remedy

in addition to herbs,

try Oscillo-cinicum (osillo-

com)—it's safe to give kids over two, and it's been shown to reduce flu symptoms.

THE #1 WAY TO PREVENT A COLD

You've heard it before: Wash your hands —and make sure your kids do, too. Most don't do it enough—in a recent study, only about half of middle- and high-school students washed their hands after using the bathroom. Ick! Encourage your kid to wash well and wash often. Make it fun by letting her pick out an all-natural soap in her favorite packaging or scent, and keep a chart near the sink where she can track her washes by marking them down with a sticker.

cold-weather smarts

The next time your kids head outside to play in the cold, keep them safe and warm with these tips from Michele Sayasana, MD, a pediatrician at the Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis:

dress them in layers. If you think sweat will be a factor from playing or running around, start with a base that can wick water away from your child's skin. If it's really cold, add an extra layer in between the base and top layer, which should be waterproof to prevent snow from soaking through.

forego gloves in favor of mittens. They keep fingers together and allow them to stay warmer.

choose insulated, waterproof boots. These will do the best job of keeping toes warm and dry when kids walk through snow.

be on the lookout for any wet clothing, which can speed up frostbite. Keep an extra hat and pair of mittens handy for kids playing in the snow.

have kids come indoors every 30 to 45 minutes to warm up. If they'll be outside for more than 45 minutes at a time, Dr. Sayasana suggests giving them warm liquids to keep their body temperatures up.

If kids develop numbness or tingling sensations anywhere on the skin, they should come inside immediately—this is a sign of frostnip, an early stage of frostbite. It's safe to deal with this at home, says Dr. Sayasana: Simply remove any wet clothing, then soak the affected area in warm water for 20 to 30 minutes. If sensation returns, you're in the clear. If not, or if the skin appears white, waxy, or hard, seek immediate medical attention.





dry skin, begone

The combination of cold winter air and dry indoor heat often results in seriously chapped skin and itchy scalps. Some natural ways to quench dry skin:

Eat your water. Your family's diet can help keep skin moisturized from the inside out. Hobbs suggests serving up plenty of water-rich raw fruits and veggies, plus cooked grains. Also be sure to drink plenty of water and hot tea.

Turn down the heat. Since very hot water can strip skin of its natural oils, keep the water at a slightly lower temperature during baths and showers.

Turn up the steam. Investing in a household humidifier will bring moisture to dry indoor air. Try the MoistAir 8 Gallon Cool Mist Humidifier, which features a fan that automatically adjusts depending on room humidity. (\$90, allergybuyersclubshopping.com)

Go au natural. The sulfates in many conventional shampoos and conditioners can wash the oils in your scalp right out, leaving you with dry, itchy skin. Instead, turn to all-natural shampoos and conditioners. To get rid of flakes and dandruff, Hobbs suggests soaking fresh rosemary in olive oil, then working the mixture into your scalp.

Rub it in. Dry skin already a problem? Slather on coconut butter for heavy-duty moisture, or try chamomile cream, a favorite of Hobbs's because of its anti-inflammatory properties and its lightness (it's water-based, which makes it less heavy duty than its oil-based counterparts).

the medicine chest in your kitchen

Try as we might to avoid them, stuffy noses and coughs are virtually guaranteed at some point during the winter (and once one family member gets the sniffles, the rest are quick to follow!). Simple ingredients that soothe in a big way:

Salt and water: To clear up a stuffy nose, fill an ear syringe with a saline wash (add one teaspoon of sea salt to one cup of warm water), then squirt the solution up nasal passages while leaning over the sink. Or try a neti pot (which looks like a small teapot) to deliver that helpful salt water: You tilt your head over

a sink, and pour the water in one nostril so it comes out the other.

Honey: Studies have shown that buckwheat honey (a dark, flavorful honey) treats a cough as well as over-the-counter medicines do. Mix it with tea or warm lemon water for you or your child—but not babies younger than one, since honey can be dangerous for them. (An option if you'll be traveling: Honey Don't Cough, liquid packets of buckwheat honey; honeydontcough.com).

Garlic: The antibacterial and antiviral properties in garlic can prevent and treat colds. Try garlic bread for kids, or add a little extra to whatever dish you're making for dinner.

THE #1 WAY TO PREVENT A COLD

Soap and water are the best way to fight germs, but what about when you're on the go? Hand sanitizers made with natural ingredients are a smart alternative to conventional sanitizers, which may have synthetic chemicals that can irritate and dry skin. There are alcohol-free varieties—which contain natural antiseptics like thyme—and organic-alcohol varieties. Some of our favorites:

EO Hand Cleansing Wipes

Clean Well All-Natural Hand Sanitizer Spray

Bentley Organic Hand Sanitizer

Chicken noodle soup: It's been the go-to cure for ages—and for good reason. Chicken noodle soup has a bunch of anti-inflammatory ingredients, including onions, garlic, and an amino acid that's released from cooked chicken. So it not only tastes good, but it's good for you too.