

How do I avoid getting sick when everyone is sneezing all over me?

This is a common question that people have this time of year. Without getting too technical about the nature of chiropractic, let me just say that getting regular chiropractic adjustments not only helps you fight the common cold, but can also keep you from getting it in the first place.

Our nervous system, comprised of the brain, spinal cord and all our nerves, controls every function in the human body. These functions range from walking and talking to being able to snap our fingers or wrinkle our noses. This powerful system gets us through our day-to-day activities. When something interferes with that nervous system, however, our bodies do not function properly, and this can affect us in any number of ways. For example, we could experience weakened muscle strength, diminished reflexes, or improper organ function; however, sometimes the symptoms are not quite so obvious. For some, fatigue or restlessness may be an indication that there is a problem. For others, it may be an inability to concentrate at school or at work or to stay focused on a task. There are also a lot of people walking around with interferences to their nervous systems without any obvious symptoms.... YET. By the time you feel any of these symptoms, something has already occurred and most likely has been occurring for some time inside of your body. That is why it is always important to get a regular check-up with your chiropractor, because it is not how you are *feeling* that matters, it's how you are *functioning* on the inside.

Germes are all around us all the time. Our bodies can protect us from most of them so long as our spines are aligned, and our immune systems are functioning at their optimum potential. There are several things we can do to give our immune systems a boost during cold and flu season.

- **Drink plenty of water.** Our bodies need plenty of fluids, especially in the dry winter weather, to refresh our cells and to hydrate our muscles. Never underestimate the power of giving your body the water it so desperately needs. This also flushes the body of toxins as well. It will be amazing how much better you will feel.
- **Do not skip meals.** Just as our vehicles need fuel to run, so do our bodies. We need the proper nourishment to have the strength to fight infection or illness. When we skip meals, we force our bodies to fight hunger instead.
- **Get your daily vitamin requirements.** Whether you take supplements or eat a lot of fruits and vegetables or both, getting the proper amounts daily is essential. Taking a little extra vitamin C when you are fighting off a cold often helps as well. Be knowledgeable about the medications you are taking. There are several drugs that can work against you in the vitamin and mineral department. For instance, substances that contain licorice have been known to strip the body of potassium.
- **Exercise.** Just as drinking plenty of water rids the body of toxins, so can exercise. You can sweat out the toxins and give your immune system a boost at the same time. It's a common mistake we all make when we get sick to avoid exercising. Our bodies are rundown, and we feel too weak to do anything, so asking you to exercise sounds crazy, I know. This process

increases metabolism, opens the sinuses and sends those germs a message that they are in for a fight.

- **Wash your hands.** We all learned it in kindergarten, right? Wash your hands several times a day. The quickest way to spread a cold is through hand and mouth contact. How many times a day do you shake hands with someone or turn door handles or pick up phone receivers that others have touched? Now, let me ask you, how often do you touch your face during the day without having washed your hands first? Washing your hands frequently and keeping a bottle of waterless hand sanitizer with you are two ways that will cut your exposure to harmful germs in half.

The most important thing to remember is to take care of yourself. Times are stressful and the cold weather often makes us blue, but if we remember to keep ourselves moving and protected, we can all get through it.