COLD HARD FACTS

The common cold is one of the most common illnesses in the world. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, colds are also one of the most common causes of missed work and school days, and in the U.S. colds account for more visits to the doctor than any other condition (even though most run their course in a few days and can be treated at home with rest).

Colds are highly contagious and are spread when you come into contact with surfaces that have been contaminated by infected individuals and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes. Believe it or not, there are hundreds of different viruses that can cause cold symptoms of varying severity. The human body cannot build resistance to the hundreds of viruses that can cause the common cold, which helps explain why so many of us seem to get the cold at least once a year.

Are You Smarter Than The Cold & Flu?

Is it a cold? Is it the flu? Should I go to the doctor? Call in sick? These are just a few of the questions that pop up for millions of Americans as we enter into cold and flu season. And although these illnesses have been around since the dark ages, many of us are still in the dark when it comes to answering these questions correctly.

Take this quick test to see how you stack up:

True OR False

Both the common cold and the flu can be treated with antibiotics.

False. Neither can be treated with antibiotics. The common cold and seasonal influenza are viral diseases that infect the upper respiratory system. So, antibiotics have absolutely no effect on the common cold or flu. Complications from the cold virus, such as ear or sinus infections can be treated with antibiotics.

The stomach flu and seasonal influenza are the same thing.

False. The word “flu” is often incorrectly used to describe stomach illnesses. Gastrointestinal viruses are called the “stomach flu,” but they have no connection to seasonal influenza viruses. If you suffer vomiting and diarrhea, but no fever or body ache, you probably do not have the seasonal flu.

You should see a doctor immediately if you have the seasonal flu.

False. If you have the seasonal flu, you will certainly feel terrible. In addition to congestion and cough, you’re apt to have nasty body aches and fever, but immediately seeing a doctor usually isn’t necessary. Plenty of rest and clear fluids like water and broth will help you recover. Do see a doctor right away if you’re having difficulty breathing, experience severe painful swallowing or have a fever that won’t go away after a few days—these could all be signs of a secondary condition that requires medical attention.
This hearty recipe from Dr. Ann Kulze is not only delicious, but it will also help keep you full for hours. Given the liberal dose of hunger-fighting protein provided by the eggs and all the filling fiber provided by the veggies, you may have to remind yourself to eat when lunchtime rolls around!

Here is how you make this meal…

**FILLING:**

- ½ medium yellow or red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 packed handfuls of washed, fresh baby spinach leaves (about 2 cups) or 1 cup thawed frozen spinach
- 2 omega-3 fortified eggs
- ½ cup fresh salsa (I prefer Garden Fresh Gourmet)
- Salt and pepper to taste

**DIRECTIONS:**

In a skillet over low to medium heat, sauté the onions in the olive oil until they are soft and translucent. Add the spinach leaves and stir until they are wilted (about 2–3 minutes). Add the eggs and scramble with the veggies until the eggs are cooked to your liking. Salt and pepper to taste. Place the veggie omelet scramble on a serving plate and top with fresh salsa.

(Serves one)

**SUPER FOOD OF THE MONTH: SALSA**

Salsa is delicious, refreshing, low in calories, and teeming with a synergy of beneficial compounds including fiber, vitamin C, potassium, and lycopene, along with 100’s of other beneficial phytochemicals thanks to the tomatoes, peppers, onions, garlic, and cilantro that comprise this zesty, great-for-you concoction. Convenient, freshly prepared salsas available in the refrigerated section of the grocery are the tastiest and healthiest.
Pick up practically any food item in your local grocery store and you’ll be sure to find some sort of health claim. Nutritional promises of vitamins, minerals and fiber are just a few claims you may see splashed on packaging. But can that box of Lucky Charms really be a great source of whole grains?! Here’s a quick breakdown of the lingo, so you know exactly what you’re getting from your foods.

**THE CLAIM:** Packed with Antioxidants

**THE TRUTH:** Antioxidants include vitamins and minerals and are essential in protecting healthy cells. According to the Food and Drug Administration, packaged foods only need to contain 10 percent of your daily intake of antioxidants to be considered a “good source”. So, read the label carefully to determine how much of any vitamin or mineral you’re really getting.

**THE CLAIM:** Gluten-Free

**THE TRUTH:** Sales of gluten-free products, which are designed for people with celiac disease, or an inability to digest gluten (the protein in wheat, barley, and rye), have doubled in the past decade. Foods advertised as gluten-free are usually more expensive, but they really aren’t necessary unless you have celiac disease or gluten sensitivity. Moreover, gluten-free doesn’t automatically mean the food is healthy. Gluten-free products tend to be higher in calories and lower in fiber than regular grain products.

**THE CLAIM:** No high-fructose corn syrup

**THE TRUTH:** Some research has suggested a link between high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and obesity and diabetes. As a result, many food manufacturers have starting labeling their products as HFCS-free. But, read the label carefully, as this doesn’t mean the product is now sugar-free. Any products that list sweeteners such sucrose, fructose and fruit juice concentrate as one of the first few ingredients are loaded with sugar and should be avoided.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

Food labels provide important information about the food you’re eating—serving sizes, calories, fat, important nutrients, as well as salt, sugar, and cholesterol.

Here’s what you should look for on the Nutrition Facts label:

1. Check the serving size and number of servings.
2. Calories count, so pay attention to the amount.
3. Look for foods that are rich in these nutrients.
4. The % Daily Value is a key to a balanced diet.
5. Make sure saturated fat levels are low.
6. Reduce sodium to protect heart health.
7. Reach for healthy carbohydrates that come from fiber rather than sugar.
8. Shoot for about 10-25 grams of protein a meal.
1 Get vaccinated every year. It’s simply one of the best tools to protect against the flu. Your vaccination from last year doesn’t carry over to the next year.

2 Stay away from the community candy bowl. Or any type of food in which various people can touch and contaminate it. It’s a surefire way to pick up nasty germs.

3 Wash your hands with soap and water often. Cold and flu germs can live for hours on surfaces like door handles, phones, counters, etc. Hand washing is the best way to get rid of any cold and flu germs you may have picked up from contaminated surfaces.

4 Cover your sneeze with a tissue or your arm—not your hand. Germs and viruses cling to your bare hands, making it easy for you to pass your “yuck” to others. Sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of your elbow.

5 Aim for 30 minutes of aerobic exercise a day. Aerobic exercise is truly a weapon against the cold and flu. Any type of activity (walking, biking, running, etc.) helps increase your body’s natural virus-killing cells.

6 Get your daily dose of vitamin D. Vitamin D may keep colds at bay. A 2009 study from Massachusetts General Hospital found that lower vitamin D levels were associated with a greater risk of upper respiratory infections. This vitamin can be found in fortified foods such as milk, orange juice and breakfast cereal.

7 Don’t smoke and stay away from second-hand smoke. Statistics show that heavy smokers get more severe colds and more frequent ones.

8 Drink hot tea. Drinking hot tea and breathing in steam stimulates the cilia—the hair follicles in your nose. When cilia moves, they sweep cold and flu viruses out of the nasal passages. Moreover, the warmth helps loosen mucus, making it easier to cough out.

9 Eat a lean protein at every meal. Research shows that diets that are too low in protein can deplete the immune system.

Remember to talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.
10 **Carry your own pen.** Stay away from public pens at banks, stores, offices, etc, and carry your own to help stay away from nasty bugs that can cling on to this utensil.

11 **Sanitize your mobile phone daily.** Your phone can be a literal cesspool for germs. Take a sanitizing wipe and clean your phone daily to cut back on the germs that get near your face and mouth.

12 **Add garlic to your diet.** Allicin is a substance found in crushed garlic, and it’s been shown to help fight viruses. In a British study, volunteers who took a daily 180 mg allicin supplement caught 63 percent fewer colds over 12 weeks than those taking a placebo. Consider a supplement or aim to add a few cloves of garlic as seasoning to your daily meals.

13 **Limit your sugar intake.** Excessive sugar can depress your immune system for several hours. A study at Loma Linda University found that participants’ infection-fighting white blood cells lost the ability to fend off bacteria and viruses when they consumed six tablespoons of sugar (from various sources like juice, honey, soda).

14 **Sleep 7 to 8 hours a night.** Research shows that you need seven to eight hours of sleep in order to stimulate an immune response from your body’s natural virus-killing cells.

15 **Devote time to relaxation every day.** Research shows that when you take time to relax your interleukins (proteins that help your immune system’s response to cold and flu viruses) increase in the bloodstream. Mix in a few minutes of deep breathing into your day, and carve out time to unwind, like taking a relaxing walk or bath.

16 **Cut alcohol consumption.** Heavy drinking suppresses the immune system in a variety of ways. Additionally, evidence shows that heavier drinkers are more prone to infections as well as secondary complications. Limit yourself to no more than two drinks a day if you’re male, and one if you’re female.
Strong muscles in quadriceps (the front of your thigh) and hamstrings (the back of your thigh) help your knee joint absorb shock. The less strain on your knee, the more likely you’ll be able to experience pain relief and prevent further injury.

Did you know that the knee is the largest joint in your body? It joins your thigh to your leg and along with being the largest joint, it is also believed to be the most complicated. Specifically, your knees allow various types of motion, and as such they take on a fair share of impact and abuse. Not surprisingly, knee pain is a common complaint among people of all ages. In fact, in the United States, it’s responsible for about one-third of all doctor’s visits for muscle and bone pain.

Some of the most common reasons for knee pain include inflammation caused by improper lifting of heavy objects, poor flexibility, bad shoes, muscle weakness, performing rigorous exercise without warming up and structural knee problems, such as arthritis or ligament damage.

Fortunately, there are some simple strategies you can follow to treat and prevent knee pain and injury.

1 **Maintain a healthy weight.** Your weight plays a major role in knee pain. Every extra pound you pack on puts about four extra pounds of pressure on your knees. Think about it—if you walked around all day with a 10-pound backpack, your back and knees would probably be pretty achy by the end of the day. Even shedding a few pounds can take some strain off and help your knees feel better.

2 **Focus on moderate exercise every day.** Staying active helps control weight and build muscle, both of which can help protect your knees. Even if you’re experiencing knee pain,
some forms of exercise can be beneficial, and can help promote recovery (see the column on when you should seek medical treatment for knee pain). Aim for 30 minutes of activity a day, and focus on low-impact exercises like walking on level ground, swimming, using an elliptical machine or a stationary bike.

**3 Take 5 to 10 minutes to stretch.** Stretching helps to lubricate your joints and it can also help prevent overuse injuries to your knees. Focus on stretches that target your calves, hamstrings and quadriceps, as they can take pressure off of your knees and kneecaps. You can also protect your knees by slowly ramping up your workout, rather than jumping in at full speed.

**4 Strengthen the muscles around the knees.** Weak muscles are a primary cause of knee injuries. When the muscles around the kneecap, hip and pelvis are strong, it keeps the knee stable and balanced, providing support by absorbing some of the stress exerted on the joint. Strength training that focuses on building the muscles in your quadriceps and hamstrings can decrease pain (this is even true for those with structural knee problems like arthritis).

**5 Don’t overdo it.** Pushing too hard is also related to overtraining syndrome, a physiological and psychological condition among athletes in which they exceed their ability to perform and recover from physical exertion, often leading to injury or lowered performance. Alternate hard training days with easy ones so your body can recover. Don’t overdo it. Pushing your body to its limits every day is a recipe for injury. A sudden increase in intensity or duration of exercise can cause overuse injuries from repetitive strain. Tendonitis and kneecap pain are common symptoms in the knee.

**Try these knee-friendly exercises and stretches.**

› **Straight-Leg Lifts:** Lie on the floor on your back, with one leg bent at a 90-degree angle and your foot flat on the ground. Lift the other leg off the ground for 10 to 15 reps then repeat on the other side.

› **Hamstring Curls:** Lie on your stomach with your legs straight and your head resting on your arms or the ground. Bend one leg with the heel toward your buttocks. Repeat 10 to 15 times on each leg.

› **Wall Squat:** Stand with your head, back and hips against a wall. Step your feet out about two feet from the wall, hip-width apart. Slowly slide down the wall until you are almost in a sitting position. Hold for 5 to 10 seconds, then slowly slide up. Repeat 10 to 20 times.

**SHOULD YOU SEE YOUR DOC?**

**What You ‘Knee’d’ to Know**

You should see a doctor for your knee pain if you have any of the following warning signs:

- **Persistent pain or swelling that doesn’t get any better after 48 hours.** If you have significant pain or swelling within the knee joint for more than a day or two you should seek medical care.

- **Severely limited or lost range of motion.** Reduced range-of-motion can indicate significant internal swelling, as well as other joint injuries. If you have limited range-of-motion for more than a day, you should contact your doctor.

- **Inability to put your full weight on your leg.** If your knee is in so much pain you can’t walk properly, it requires attention.

In general, if the pain limits your ability to do what you normally do for any longer than a day or two, you need to have it checked out.
5 Smart Things To Do... When You Have The Cold Or Flu

Even with the best prevention efforts, you may still contract the cold or flu bug this season. Fortunately, most cases of the cold and flu can be treated at home with a few smart strategies:

1. **Stay at home.** If you have a fever and are experiencing other symptoms (headache, cough, congestion, sore throat), stay at home and get rest. This will help prevent the spread of your illness to others, and the much needed rest will also help you recover faster.

2. **Drink plenty of clear fluids.** Dehydration can easily occur (especially if you are running a fever or vomiting). Drink plenty of water and/or clear broth like vegetable or chicken.

3. **Take OTC meds if they help ease your symptoms.** Take only as directed on the package, and only if they help ease your symptoms.

4. **Throw away used tissues and wash your sheets.** It will help kill germs and prevent them from spreading.

5. **Watch your symptoms.** If they don’t get better after a day or two of rest, call or visit your doctor.

What’s In A Number?

**STRETCHING & RESISTANCE TRAINING**

Stretching and resistance training is absolutely FREE and can help strengthen your knees and prevent injury.

**KNEE REPLACEMENT**

The amount can vary greatly, but this is the average hospital charge for a total knee replacement.

DID YOU KNOW? 

- **5 TO 10 minutes**
  - The amount of stretching that’s needed to lubricate your knee joint to help prevent overuse injuries to your knees.

- **10 percent**
  - Packaged foods only need to contain 10% of your daily allowance of antioxidants to make the claim that they’re a good source.

IN THE U.S., Colds Account for More Visits to the Doctor Than Any Other Condition (Even Though Most Run Their Course in a Few Days and Can Be Treated at Home With Rest).