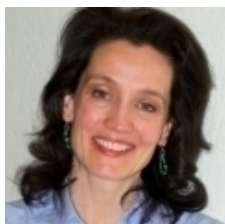


Flu season just arrived – are you ready?

By Mandy Kendall

It seems that our unusually mild winter may have had at least one benefit, in the guise of a late flu season. Officials for the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention announced last Friday that the number of flu cases reported had just reached the tipping point used to declare the start of the flu season. This is only the second time the season, which often starts around Christmas in California, has waited until February.

I had begun to think that I might have survived another winter without succumbing to the flu, but have decided that I'm going to make sure I keep up the "flu survival tactics" for just a bit longer. I also decided to do some more research to make sure I wasn't missing out on any other immune boosting tactics.



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Here are my top five favorite flu fighting *Qwik-e* (quick and easy) tips:

Rest – If you don't feel well and you just want to crawl into bed, then try and do just that. It might not seem convenient (or even possible) with a busy schedule but, if you can, chances are a day of absolute rest will markedly shorten the

time you are unwell. The body does most of its repair when you are sleeping, so try and get as much sleep as possible. It will also help prevent spreading it around to all those you come into contact with.

Hydration – Two of the main functions of water is to carry nutrients to the cells of your body and carry toxins out of the body. Sounds like a disease fighting strategy to me.

Contact – A hug is better than a handshake. We all naturally touch our faces many times during the day, so if you've shaken hands with someone who may have flu germs on their hands, chances are you are going to put those germs on your face. If you hug someone, there is much less chance of germ transference. However, if hugging isn't your thing, or it's not appropriate, just be conscientious about hand washing throughout the day. Also try and be kind to others and sneeze or cough into a tissue (or the crook of your elbow if a tissue is not to hand) rather than expelling germs into mid air or into your hands.

Don't forget to remind kids too on the importance of hand washing and coughing and sneezing best practice.

Boost your natural defenses — Eat plenty of colorful fresh food as it's loaded with lots of immune boosting antioxidants and vitamins. Your body needs a wide range of nutrients, especially when fighting off disease.

Sugar – Sugar significantly lowers the functioning of your immune system so limit, or avoid, sugar intake as much as possible. Also, fruit juices have high levels of sugar, so try eating the whole fruit instead for a good source of vitamin C.

As for the often-controversial topic of flu shots I shall leave that up to you. However, as I believe in information from all sides when making any decision, I found to be a useful review of the pros and cons of flu shots.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.