Live Well, Work Well

October 2022

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What to Know About This Year's Flu Season

Influenza (flu) season lasts from October through May in the United States, with peak flu activity happening between December and March. The country's flu activity has been unusual since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which could pose consequences for the upcoming season.

Furthermore, flu season in the Southern Hemisphere may indicate what's to come in the United States. In particular, Australia has been experiencing an unusual surge in flu activity early in the season. Health experts now warn that the same could happen in the United States later this year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the flu caused between 9 million and 41 million illnesses each year in the United States from 2010-2020.

How to Stay Healthy

The flu can cause serious complications for people of any age, but children and the elderly are especially vulnerable. To help keep your household healthy this flu season, consider the following suggestions:

- Get the flu vaccine. Being vaccinated against the flu is your best chance of preventing the illness. The CDC recommends that anyone age 6 months and older get a flu shot every year.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and stay away from others when you feel unwell. Because flu and COVID-19 symptoms are similar, doctors say it's best to get tested to know what you have.
- Wash your hands often using soap and warm water to protect against germs. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes to prevent the spread of germs.
- Get quality sleep, stay active and drink plenty of water to keep your immune system strong.
- Eat a nutritious diet rich in healthy grains, fruits, vegetables and fiber.

September and October are the best months to get vaccinated against the flu, so don't delay getting your shot. Contact your doctor today to learn more about vaccines.

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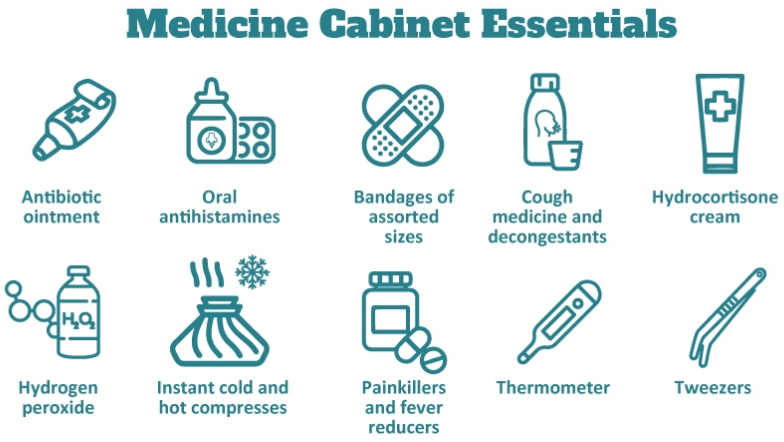
What's In Your Medicine Cabinet?

According to a Walgreens survey, the average American opens their medicine cabinet 468 times each year. However, nearly 3 in 4 people (74%) admit that they often forget to replace their expired products. When it comes to handling illnesses or injuries in your home, it's essential to be prepared with a well-stocked and up-to-date medicine cabinet. That way, you'll be able to respond quickly to help yourself or others when accidents occur.

As the seasons change, now is a great time to check the expiration dates of medicine cabinet items and refresh them as needed. It's also important to make sure you have any cold- and flu-related items on hand. Check out the infographic below for a list of medicine cabinet essentials, and make it a habit to check expiration dates every three months so you're always prepared.



Start Planning Now for a Stress-free Holiday Season

While the holiday season often brings joy and togetherness, it can also cause stress for many individuals. Top holiday stressors include budgeting, managing multiple commitments and finding the perfect gifts. Fortunately, by getting organized and planning out what you can do ahead of time, you can help reduce your holiday stress. Consider the following tips:

- **Write down any known commitments.** Are you planning on hosting a holiday dinner? Does your child's school have a seasonal concert? Making a list of your commitments will help you plan your time accordingly and avoid double-booking yourself.
- **Create your budget now.** If you're stressed about how your holiday spending will impact you after the season is over, you're not alone. Remember that the sentiment of a gift is much more important than the cost. As such, be sure to set a realistic budget for gifts and stick to it.
- **Start shopping early.** Don't be afraid to shop early. Sometimes, you can get great deals on presents even before the holiday season hits. Moreover, you can avoid the scenario of not being able to get the gift you want because it's sold out.

By keeping these tips in mind, you'll be on your way to a stress-free holiday season.

Spaghetti Squash With Tomatoes, Basil and Parmesan

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients

1 spaghetti squash (about 24 ounces, halved, seeded)
1 Tbsp. olive oil
3 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese
¼ tsp. dried oregano
2 tsp. dried basil (or ½ cup fresh basil, chopped)
1 cup cherry tomatoes (thinly sliced)
Salt and pepper to taste (optional)

Preparations

1) Place the two spaghetti squash halves, cut-side down, in a glass baking dish. Add about ¼ cup of water to the dish and cover it with plastic wrap.
2) Microwave the dish on high for 12 minutes, or until the squash is soft when pressed. Let it stand (still covered) for three minutes.
3) In a large bowl, whisk the oil, basil, oregano and 2 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese together. Stir in the tomatoes and season the mixture lightly with salt and pepper to taste.
4) Scrape the squash out with a fork and add strands to the tomato mixture, tossing until combined.
5) Sprinkle the combined mixture with the remaining Parmesan cheese and serve.

Nutritional Information (per serving)

Total calories	77
Total fat	5 g
Protein	2 g
Sodium	67 mg
Carbohydrate	7 g
Dietary fiber	2 g
Saturated fat	1 g
Total sugars	3 g

Source: MyPlate