



Welcome to the May edition of the FitSense Australia Wellness Newsletter.

It is starting to get cold and we are definitely on our way into winter. For that reason this issue of the newsletter concentrates on keeping good health and fitness throughout the colder months.

There's an article on how to avoid the most common winter illnesses - namely, colds and flus, and there's an article on the importance of warming up before exercising, particularly when the weather as well as your body are cold.

We also have some tips on how to stay active when it is cold outside and getting out there is not so appealing, and our recipe section includes a great healthy recipe for beef fajitas which are sure to warm you up!

Finally, even though it may be tempting to retreat indoors and hibernate for the winter, remember that you will feel better and maintain better health throughout the winter and into spring if you stay fit and continue to eat healthy food. So, rug up, eat well and keep moving.

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Keeping Healthy & Avoiding Common Winter Illnesses

Two of the most common winter illnesses are the common cold and the flu. These are two very different illnesses and yet some of the ways in which they can be avoided are similar.

Common Cold

There are over 200 types of viruses that can cause the common cold and that is why it is not possible to be immunised against it. The common cold is also still the most prevalent contagious disease in the country, and the reason most often cited for people being absent from work. Most people get 2-3 colds per year but people who are high risk or who work with high risk people may get 6-12 colds per year.

Colds are caused by the cold virus being transmitted from someone infected with it to another person via coughing or sneezing near them, and/or by hand to hand contact after touching infected noses, eyes etc. Being cold does not cause colds. People often get more colds in winter because of being closer to infected people and because working/living environments tend to more closed and less well ventilated.

Avoiding a Common Cold

- Avoid contact and close proximity with people who have coughs and colds
- Wash hands regularly, particularly before eating and drinking
- Don't share utensils, cups, towels etc
- Maintain a healthy diet and regular exercise to boost immunity.



Flu

The flu is caused by a viral infection but not the same viral infection(s) as the common cold. It is highly contagious and can result in serious complications and/or death.

Flu is caused by the flu virus being transmitted by someone infected with it to another person via coughing or sneezing near them, and/or by hand to hand contact, or hand to shared object contact after touching infected noses, eyes etc.

Flu Vaccine

Each year a new flu vaccine is made available to immunise against the most common/recent strains of flu. It has been shown to be 70%-90% effective in healthy people under the age of 65yrs. Mild reactions to the vaccine may include localised redness and swelling around the vaccination site, headache, mild fever and/or sore muscles. These reactions generally pass after 24-48hrs. It is rare to have a serious reaction to the flu vaccine. The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu because it does not contain any live viruses. People with minor illnesses can still have the flu vaccine but people who have a fever should postpone having the flu vaccine until they are well again. And people who are allergic to eggs should not have the flu vaccine at all. Immunity to the flu takes about two weeks to come into effect after being vaccinated. Immunity then lasts for approximately twelve months which is why it is important to be vaccinated every year.

Avoiding Flu

- Consider having the flu vaccine
- Avoid contact and close proximity with people who have the flu
- Wash hands regularly, don't share utensils, cups, towels etc, and don't touch things that have been handled by someone with the flu
- Maintain a healthy diet and regular exercise to boost immunity.

Workout Indoors

- Set up an exercise circuit or home gym.
- Go to the gym and do your own training or attend some organised fitness classes.
- Join an indoor sporting team such as indoor netball, cricket, soccer or volleyball.
- Do a regular aqua aerobics class or swim some laps at an indoor pool.
- Try a variety of dancing classes.
- Get into yoga or tai chi or pilates.
- Hire a series of fitness DVDs and do some guided classes at home.
- Try some alternative indoor physical activities like rock climbing or ten pin bowling.



Embrace the Outdoors

- Rug up and do what you normally do.
- Wear layers - the layer closest to your skin should be synthetic like polypropylene which moves moisture away from the body and keeps a layer of dry air near the skin. The second layer should be an insulating layer for warmth - e.g., wool or down - and the outer layer should be like a shell and both windproof and shower or waterproof.
- Keep ears, feet and hands warm as they are most susceptible to cold.
- Keep neck and head covered as most of your body's heat (~40%) can be lost through your head.
- Try some activities that you can only do in winter like skiing.
- If possible, adjust your schedule so that you exercise in the lightest and warmest part of the day - e.g., lunchtime instead of early morning or evening.
- Wear reflective clothing and take a torch or head lamp if exercising in the dark.



Physical Activity

The Importance of Warming Up



A good warm up is one of the most important parts of any physical activity session. It helps to prevent injury and prepare the body for the activity it is about to do. More specifically, a good warm up:

- increases the body's core temperature which helps to prime the nerve to muscle pathways ready for exercise;
- increases blood flow throughout the body which warms up the muscles and prepares them for stretching and working at a higher level of intensity;
- increases heart rate which prepares the heart for an increase in demand;
- prepares the mind for focussing on the activity.

The best type of warm up depends on the activity or sport that is about to be undertaken, the level of intensity or competition, and the age or level of development of the participant. However, every warm up should incorporate big movements using the muscle groups and actions that are involved in the activity or sport about to be undertaken. The warm up should start at a low intensity and gradually build to the level of intensity of the activity about to be commenced, regardless of whether it is a recreational activity, sport training session, game or competition.

Generally, a warm up of around 10 minutes is sufficient for most activities, although in colder weather and if the level of activity is going to be high intensity, then the duration of the warm up needs to be increased.

Any warm up should follow this sequence:

General Warm Up

- 5-10 minutes of light, low intensity activity such as walking or jogging
- Large circular arm movements or low intensity pumping of arms

Activity or Sport Specific Warm Up

- sport specific movements or drills at a slow pace - e.g., side stepping for soccer players, easy throwing/catching practice for cricketers, slow paced hitting ball for tennis players, strides for runners
- sport specific movements or drills at an increasing pace

Stretching

- when fully warm, some activity or sport specific dynamic stretching - i.e., stretching while moving muscles through range of motion.



Once warmed up, activity should start without delay. Cooling down before being active defeats the purpose of warming up. If this happens, the warm up should be repeated, even if it is a little shorter than the initial warm up.

Recipe - Hot and Healthy Beef Fajitas

1 cup rice (omit for Low Fuel)
1 teaspoon minced garlic
3 tablespoons barbecue sauce
2 tablespoons MAGGI Chilli Sauce
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
500 g beef, cut into strips
250 g cherry tomatoes, quartered
400 g can corn kernels, rinsed and drained
1 Lebanese cucumber, diced
2 tablespoons lemon juice
olive or canola oil spray
1 red onion, sliced
1 red capsicum, deseeded and sliced
200 g button mushrooms, sliced
1 tablespoon chopped jalapeno chillies
2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander
12 flour tortillas
12 lettuce leaves
taco sauce, to serve



Cook rice according to packet instructions (omit for Low Fuel). Combine garlic, sauces, spices and beef in a plastic bag. Massage to evenly coat meat. Refrigerate for 15-30 minutes to marinate. Meanwhile, to make a salsa, combine tomatoes, corn, cucumber and lemon juice in a small bowl. Spray a nonstick frypan with oil and cook onion, capsicum and mushrooms over medium-high heat until soft. Add meat and cook until browned. Stir through chillies and coriander. Heat tortillas in microwave on HIGH for 30-60 seconds or until warm and flexible. To assemble fajitas, line tortillas with lettuce, top with meat mixture, salsa and taco sauce and roll up. Serve with rice (if using).

Recipe from the Australian Institute of Sport Recipe Book: **Survival Around the World**

Corporate Wellness Progress - Worldwide

The health of employees is continuing to get attention from governments around the world. In May, a spokesman for Barack Obama said "As a result of many successful programs at businesses across the country, workers have become more engaged in their own health, productivity is increasing, absenteeism is dropping, and employers are passing some of their health care savings to their workers". Because of the success of these programs Barack Obama's government is now investigating the best approach to implementing a workplace health program for US federal employees.

In Australia, several state governments have launched government-funded workplace health programs for the private sector. This was initially started in Victoria but the Commonwealth Government has since distributed funds to all states and territories for similar activities. While it is still early days, it will be interesting to see how these programs unfold and the health benefits that flow from them. There is no doubt that using government funds to implement effective workplace health programs will assist in improving the health of our nation.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- 16 May 2009 **Canberra Half Marathon Eve Fun Runs - 1.5km and 5km**
<http://www.canberrarunner.com.au/index.php?module=Special&action=index&id=11>
- 17 May 2009 **Canberra Half Marathon**
<http://www.canberrarunner.com.au/index.php?module=Special&action=index&id=11>
- 17 May 2009 **RSPCA Million Paws Walk**
<http://www.rspca.com.au/>
- 31 May 2009 **World No Tobacco Day**
<http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/>
- 7-13 June 2009 **Bowel Cancer Awareness Week**
http://www.bowelcanceraustralia.com/bowel_cancer/awareness.html
- 8 June 2009 **Sri Chinmoy Half Marathon/5 Mile Fun Run/2 Mile Fun Run**
http://www.srichinmoyraces.org/au/events/canberrarunning/half_marathon_5_2_milers
- 12 June **Heart Foundation Go Red and Walk at Work Day**
http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/Get_Involved/Whats_On/ACT/Pages/GoRedWalkatWorkDay.aspx
- 15 - 21 June 2009 **Men's Health Week**
<http://www.menshealthweek.com.au/>
- 21 June 2009 **Canada Fun Run for Cancer**
<http://www.actcancer.org/downloads/File/Canada%20Fun%20Run%20Reg%20Form%202009.pdf>



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