



## COLD AND FLU PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE .

BY RACHEL SAVIEO

It's often said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and that certainly holds true when it comes to colds and the flu. While there is no known cure for either, there is a lot we can do to prevent getting sick, especially during the peak of cold and flu season. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- **Get a flu shot.** Many employers offer flu shots onsite. If that is an option for you, take advantage! If not, flu vaccines are offered at most chain pharmacies and are often covered by insurance.
- **Wash your hands.** This is the single most important thing you can do to stop the spread of viruses, since germs

are commonly transmitted from hand to mouth. Wash your hands before eating, or use hand sanitizer if hand washing isn't an option.

- **Avoid contact.** If you do find yourself feeling sick, stay home from work. The CDC recommends that a person who catches the flu should stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone.
- **Keep surfaces clean.** Whether or not your coworkers are sick, this is a good practice as a general rule. Keeping shared surfaces, such as doorknobs, phones, and keyboards, clean can prevent the spread of infection.

Source: US HealthWorks Medical Group. <https://www.ushealthworks.com/blog/2016/02/5-easy-ways-stop-spread-cold-flu-germs-workplace/>. Accessed 13 August 2018.

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## Smart Facts

**5 - 20%**

is the range of Americans who get the flu each year.

**70 MILLION**

work days are lost due to the flu each year.

**\$3 - \$12 BILLION**

is spent on indirect costs related to the flu each year.

Source: WebMD. <https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/fact-sheet-flu-work>. Accessed 13 August 2018.



## GET WELL REMEDIES .

BY JENNA MEARS

As cold and flu season approach, it's time to start thinking about how we will care for ourselves if we begin to feel under the weather. It's important to remember that some cold and flu symptoms simply can't be treated with a trip to the doctor or antibiotics. Here are some effective get-well remedies that work, and a few myth busters.

- **Stay hydrated:** When you're sick, you can quickly become dehydrated, which can be very dangerous. Water, clear broth, or warm lemon water with honey can help loosen congestion and prevent dehydration. Avoid alcohol, coffee, and soda, as these can make dehydration worse.
- **Rest:** This is the best way for your body to heal.
- **Sooth a sore throat:** A saltwater gargle can temporarily relieve symptoms of a sore throat. Just mix together  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  a teaspoon of salt with an 8-ounce glass of water. You can also try ice chips, throat spray, and lozenges.
- **Combat stuffiness:** Nothing is worse than an all-day sniffle. Over-the-counter saline nasal drops and spray can help relieve stuffiness and congestion.
- **Relieve Pain:** A cold or flu is typically paired with head or body aches. Take Tylenol, Advil, Motrin, or Aspirin for relief, just pay special attention to the dosage directions on the bottle.
- **Sip warm liquids:** Warm liquids like chicken soup, tea, or warm apple juice might be soothing and can ease congestion by increasing mucus flow.
- **Add Moisture to the air:** A cool-mist vaporizer or humidifier can add moisture to your home and relieve congestion.



*If you are feeling under the weather, listen to your body. Slow down, rest, and drink plenty of fluids!*

Despite what you may have heard, the jury is still out on these popular cold remedies.

- **Vitamin C:** Vitamin C can't help the average person prevent colds but taking Vitamin C before cold symptoms begin might shorten the duration of this pesky illness.
- **Zinc:** There has been buzz about taking zinc for colds since 1984 when a study showed that zinc supplements kept people from getting sick. Since then, there has been mixed research on its affect on colds.
- **Sweating it out:** Lots of people believe all you need to kick a cold or light flu is to sweat it out with a good workout. However, intense physical activity can depress the immune system making it harder to fight off infection. While sick, try walking, yoga, and low impact activities instead!

The moral of the story is, if you're feeling under the weather, listen to your body! Slow down, rest, drink plenty of fluids, and you'll be well in no time.

Sources: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/common-cold/in-depth/cold-remedies/art-20046403>; <https://www.health.com/beauty/alternative-medicine-taking-hold-among-americans-report>; [https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/common\\_cold\\_overview](https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/common_cold_overview); <https://www.precisionnutrition.com/working-out-when-sick>. Accessed 13 August 2018



# TESTING ... 1 ... 2: TELEHEALTH IS HERE.

BY JOHN THOMAS

Even if you've never heard the word "telehealth," you might have engaged in telehealth.

Have you ever logged onto a doctor's website to check test results? Uploaded health data for a nurse or doctor to review? Had a "virtual" visit – by phone or maybe by Skype – with a healthcare provider?

If you've done these things or in any other way used technology to get healthcare services from a distance, you've used telehealth. And if you haven't, you likely will soon, as telehealth is becoming widely accepted as a way to make healthcare more accessible, efficient, and affordable.

Of course, like all healthcare advances, this one comes with questions. In this space, we'll answer three big ones.

**When can I use it?** Really, that's up to your provider. Some providers use telehealth for initial consultations, follow-up visits, or to make connections when a visit isn't possible because of distance or other obstacles. Others use it to gather or communicate information. The options are virtually unlimited, except for one thing: You should not try to use telehealth in times of emergency.

**Can I get medication?** In most cases, you can get prescriptions through telehealth, but there are limitations. Many states have passed laws allowing the prescribing of specific medications by telehealth, and the list of allowed medications is expanding. Your physician and benefits provider should know what is allowed for you.

**Is it covered?** In many cases, your insurer or government healthcare program will cover telehealth, and more is covered every day as the government and insurance providers recognize telehealth's ability to control costs and increase access to care.

So, with telehealth quickly becoming a standard component of the healthcare world, what should you do to prepare for the future that's already here?

**Step one:** Check your health benefits so that you fully understand what is and isn't accepted under your coverage.

**Step two:** Learn about the capabilities of the phone, computer, and other technology you own, because – given the course healthcare is on – sooner or later you likely will find yourself engaging in telehealth.



## October is Talk About Your Medicines Month

This month is focused on the safe use of prescription and over-the-counter medications. Half of the estimated 187 million Americans who take one or more prescription medicines do not take their medications properly. Remember, you are the best advocate for your care, and you have the right to ask questions about your medications. To learn more, visit <http://www.bemedwise.org/>.

Source: <http://www.bemedwise.org/>. Accessed 13 July 2018

# HARVEST OF THE MONTH: WINTER SQUASH

BY RACHEL SAVIEO

Winter squash are some of the most versatile ingredients of the season. They are an excellent source of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Winter squash differ from summer squash in that they are harvested in the fall, and most varieties can be stored and enjoyed for use throughout the winter. There are several types of winter squash, and they can easily be used in soups and stews, mixed with grains and salads, or used on their own as a simple side dish. The thick, protective skin keeps the squash from going soft for long periods of time, so they are convenient to buy and have on hand for whenever the mood strikes.

## How to Select

Choose squash that is heavy for its size and does not have soft spots, bruises, or mold. Bumps and discoloration on the skin are fine. You will often find a wide variety of winter squash at a farmers market – the hubbard is large and thick-skinned while the acorn squash is small. Remember that all squash are fairly similar, so stepping out to try a less-familiar funny-shaped squash won't be much different from other squash you may have worked with before.

## How to Store

Store squash in a place that is dark, dry, ventilated, and cool (around 50-55°F) until you are ready to use it.

Sources: <https://www.serious-eats.com/2017/11/winter-squash-shopping-guide.html>. Accessed 14 August 2018.  
<https://www.thekitchn.com/the-11-varieties-of-winter-squash-you-need-to-know-ingredient-intelligence-157857>. Accessed 14 August 2018.



## How to Prepare

Most types of winter squash are very versatile and can be baked, roasted, steamed, sautéed, or even cooked in the microwave. You can choose to prepare them according to a recipe or be creative in your kitchen with the variety of squash you may have found.



## Recipe: Roasted Seasoned Winter Squash Medley

### Ingredients (makes 4 servings):

- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 2 lbs mixed winter squash (butternut, kabocha, etc.), peeled and cut into ¾ –inch cubes
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. In a small bowl, combine the onion powder, garlic powder, smoked paprika, cayenne, salt, and brown sugar.
3. In a large mixing bowl, toss squash with butter and olive oil. Add 1 tablespoon of the spice mixture to the bowl and toss well to coat.
4. Place squash on a sheet pan lined with parchment and bake for 40-45 minutes, tossing every 15 minutes to allow for even browning. Sprinkle with 1½ teaspoons more of spice mixture. Toss gently to coat and serve hot.

### Nutrition Information:

PER SERVING: Calories: 140 Total Fat: 6.5g Sodium: 54mg Carbohydrates: 21g Fiber: 3.5g Sugar: 6g Protein: 2g

Source: Skinnytaste. <https://www.skinnytaste.com/roasted-seasoned-winter-squash-medley/>. Accessed 14 August 2018.