

(Health and Wellness) Working with kids, crowds, means increased flu/colds risk

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This year, the seasonal flu and H1N1 seem to be on everyone's mind. If you work with kids or in a heavily populated area, you are at a higher risk of catching some form of the flu or common cold.

Last year during the week of 10/5/08, there were 30 cases of the flu reported nationwide. The week of 10/5/09, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), reported 215 cases of the flu nationwide in elementary schools.

As a teacher and therapist, I am constantly surrounded by children with running noses, who are coughing, sniffing, and sneezing. This year, I have also been stricken with a common cold that does not want to go away. Below, are a few ideas for taking care of you during the cold and flu season.

Care for the flu or common cold

Wash your hands after all contact with someone sick. When you don't wash your hands, you spread germs to others. Most flu and cold germs are airborne and can survive in the atmosphere for long periods of time, so it is very important to disinfect and sanitize your hands and other objects such as door handles and exercise equipment.

Get plenty of exercise- Getting exercise, can build up your immune system and your ability to fight free radicals and other airborne contaminants. When your immune system is healthy, bodily organs and processes are able to work efficiently.

Eat properly – By eating staples out of the food pyramid as site by the USDA, you are giving your body the proper nutrients, to fight disease and provide energy and body warmth.

Get proper sleep – By getting enough sleep, you are giving your body enough time to recuperate from the previous day's events. Getting at least six hours of sleep per day is ideal, but getting eight hours is preferred, thus giving your body more resting time.

Drink plenty of fluids – Before you are sick and once you become ill, it is very important to stay hydrated. Drinking plenty of water, as well as natural teas and juices, will help your body digest and move toxins out of your blood stream. The body is made up of 70% water, so it is very important to stay hydrated.

Contact a qualified health professional – If you have cold or flu symptoms that persist, you will want to consult a health professional, which can treat you in a multitude of ways including practice of traditional Chinese medicine such as acupuncture or Chinese herbs.

BONUS TIP- A natural remedy to deal with a persistent cough: Eat a pear or Asian pear, these fruits are very beneficial in helping counteract a cough.

Brandi Phillips is a life coach therapist, personal trainer and professional dancer, who is interested in cultivating healthy children and sustaining healthy seniors.