



Winter can be just as much fun as summer but just as difficult to navigate if we're unprepared for it. There are some basic things we can do in advance to prepare for colder temperatures. Some important things to be aware of are staying healthy, hydrated, warm, and active.



Part of staying healthy involves getting a flu shot and eating nutritious meals. At this time of year, the flu can cause millions of preventable deaths. Choosing nutritious meals such as whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, and veggies rather than high-fat, processed, or sugary food is important, too.



The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the most recent strains of the flu virus. That's because becoming ill with flu can force those who are sick to isolate for prolonged periods or be hospitalized. Some other things that will help prevent the spread of the virus are getting proper rest, staying at least six feet away from others, and sanitizing surfaces you use regularly. You can also limit the spread of flu by trying not to touch your mouth, nose, and eyes. Stay well hydrated, too, and use hand sanitizer and/or wash your hands frequently throughout the day.

Although winter brings colder temperatures, we still sweat off a significant amount of water from the activities we pursue or from layering up what we wear. It's important to drink water before feeling thirsty. While drinking water is the most important liquid to keep you hydrated, it can also be helpful to sparingly consume low-sugar sports drinks with a balanced amount of electrolytes.



EVEN IN WINTER, STAYING ACTIVE IS KEY

BY TONISHA MELVIN

Speaking of layers, layering up during the winter is really key. Use thermals to wear under your clothes or clothing made of cotton, fleece, or wool to provide adequate warmth. Check your doors and windows for a draft of cool air to avoid losing heat when at home, and eat warm food like soups or stews.

Last but not least, stay active. Moving more often in colder temperatures will increase the circulation of blood and help keep you warm. You can stay active by going for a brisk walk, jumping rope, or doing yoga. Also, keeping socks on while sedentary with your feet elevated will increase your body temperature for prolonged periods.

Staying healthy, hydrated, warm, and active will allow you to enjoy the snow, colder temperatures, bright lights, and celebrations throughout the season.



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