

As swine flu continues to spread, experts from the **Centers for Disease Control to the World Health Organization** to neighborhood doctors are echoing the call for everyone to practice smart flu prevention techniques. Here are 10 ways to keep your body boosted and your immune system ready to fight infection.

#### **Wash Your Hands**

And wash them often, in hot soapy water, and for the amount of time it takes you to sing "Happy Birthday" twice (15-20 seconds).

#### **Get Enough Sleep**

This means slightly different things to different people, but try to get 8 hours of good rest each night to keep your immune system in top flu-fighting shape.

#### **Keep Hydrated**

Drink 8-10 8-oz. glasses of water each day to flush toxins from your system and maintain good moisture and mucous production in your sinuses.

#### **Eat Immune-Boosting Foods**

Keeping your body strong, nourished, and ready to fight infection is important in flu prevention. Fatty foods can slow your metabolism, make you feel sluggish, and compromise your immune system. So stick with whole grains, colorful vegetables, and vitamin-rich fruits.

#### **Avoid Alcohol**

In addition to being a mood depressant, alcohol is an immune suppressant that can actually decrease your resistance to viral infections like swine flu. For women, alcohol suppresses estrogen production, which further impairs the immune system. So avoid alcoholic beverages to keep your immune system strong.

#### **Keep Physically Active**

Mild to moderate exercise—for example brisk walking for 30-40 minutes 3-4 times a week—supports the immune system by increasing circulation, oxygenating the body, purging toxins through sweat, and releasing tension and stress. So get moving!

#### **Be Vigilant of Surfaces**

This is as much a mindfulness exercise as anything else. Be aware of what public surfaces you touch, when you've shaken hands with someone, or when you're using something like a pen that others have recently used--and don't touch your face until you've had a chance to wash your hands.

#### **Avoid Contact with Sick People**

A more blunt way to put this is, don't get spit on. Flu virus is spread when particles dispersed into the air through a cough or sneeze reach someone else's nose. So if you're coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth (and then wash your hands), and if you have to be around someone who is sick, try to stay a few feet away from them and avoid physical contact.

#### **Know When to Get Help**

Swine flu can look like regular flu, so don't feel like you necessarily are infected if you're exhibiting flu-like symptoms. But do go to your doctor if you live in an area where there are documented cases, or if your symptoms are severe.

#### **Keep it in Perspective**

Stress releases hormones into our bodies that can compromise our immune systems and actually make us more susceptible to viruses like swine flu. So keep your concern and vigilance over swine flu in perspective to keep it from taking over your mind and body.