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Stay WELL During Cold Season

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If you're one of the lucky ones who has yet to be impacted by this year's round of the cold virus, give yourself a pat on the back! Aside from general good habits such as proper handwashing, getting enough sleep and coughing into your elbow, there are a few things that you can do (backed by science) regarding your diet, to help bump up your immune system, or reduce how long your body is invaded by the circulating virus!

1. **Vitamin C** – Getting a least 200mg a day of this virus-scavenging vitamin may help reduce the length of cold symptoms. Foods that have high amounts of vitamin C are: oranges, berries, kiwi, strawberries, broccoli and bell peppers
2. **Zinc** – Although we don't know the exact amount needed to help with immunity to colds, we do know that consuming zinc in the early stages of a cold may help lessen symptoms and shorten the duration. We also know however, that taking more than 40mg/day is NOT a good for us, so stay clear of overloading on supplements. Good sources of zinc: beef, poultry, fish, oysters, baked beans, nuts and whole grains
3. **Probiotics** – There is some evidence that regularly taking probiotics (10 billion cultures or more) for at least 3 months before cold and flu season may improve your immune system, thus reducing your chance of getting a cold.
4. **Variety** – Variety in your diet (think eating from all four food groups) ensures that your body is getting all the various vitamins and minerals it needs to maintain good health

Sources:

Tips for staying well during cold and flu season, Dietitians of Canada; Penn – Handout, 2011
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/common-cold/in-depth/cold-remedies/art-20046403>