

Arthritis Awareness Month Tip Sheet

How to Manage Cold and Flu Season



GLOBAL
HEALTHY
LIVING
FOUNDATION

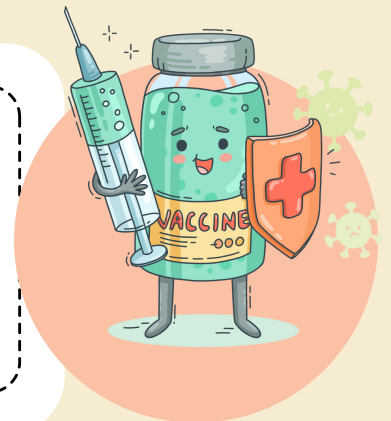
CAPA

Canadian Arthritis
Patient Alliance

Global Healthy Living Foundation's (GHLF) CreakyJoints Canada and the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance (CAPA) have come together during September, Arthritis Awareness Month, to provide the inflammatory arthritis community with this tip sheet on how to best protect themselves this fall and winter in the face of cold and flu season and rising COVID-19 cases.

Get Vaccinated

Vaccines save lives and can help reduce the risk of more severe symptoms if you fall ill. October is a great time of year to get up to date on your flu, COVID-19 and RSV vaccines if you are eligible. If you are someone who experiences an increase in your arthritis symptoms after a vaccine, try to schedule your appointment during a time when you don't have work or plans so you can rest and recover. Ask your health care provider if you are unsure whether you're up to date on the latest vaccines. In many provinces you can go online and check your vaccine as well as find tips for receiving your shots while on certain medications.



Wear a Mask

Mask fatigue is a real thing, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, [according to the World Health Organization](#), wearing a mask is proven to help reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses and can help limit the spread of COVID-19. A recent poll conducted jointly by CAPA and GHLF found that the majority of people polled (n=2851) would wear a mask as follows: 1. In indoor spaces (57.77%) 2. On public transportation (61.66%) and 3. At indoor events (52.68%). Masking is one actionable step you can take to help protect yourself and others.



Ask Before Getting Together

If you're getting together with family members and friends, you could ask them beforehand how they're feeling (e.g. under the weather) or ask them to take a COVID-19 test before you get together. That way, you're taking an extra step to protect yourself while also helping to ensure everyone else in the group is protected as well.



Seek Peer Support

Whether in groups or just talking one-on-one, peer support helps people share information and can help people feel less alone, especially when living as an immunocompromised person. Be sure to check in with your peers and lean on them for support, especially when facing cold and flu season and navigating everything from pandemic and mask fatigue to family gatherings.



Focus on Healthy Eating

With the rising cost of food and inflation, it can be even more of a struggle to eat healthy. However, there are still things we can do to help ensure we are eating the best we can to stay healthy during the cold months that keep our food budgets in line with our means. These things might include:

1. Making a meal plan
2. Buying frozen produce instead of fresh produce
- and 3. Considering canned options and beans as a key source of protein when meat is expensive (if you eat meat).



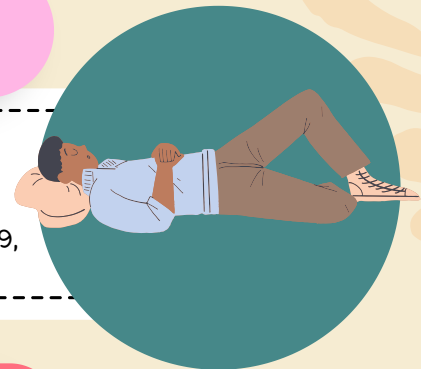
Get Informed About Home Remedies

For people living with inflammatory arthritis, some supplements and vitamins may not be good to take if you have a cold or the flu. Be sure to talk to your health care provider before starting any supplement or vitamin outside of your regular treatment routine, especially if you come down with the cold or flu.



Prioritize Sleep

Sleep is important for your immune system, especially when you are immunocompromised. Give your body time to rest and prioritize sleep when possible to ensure you get enough to keep your mind and body operating as well as possible. If you are experiencing sleep problems after having COVID-19, [check out these additional tips](#).



Be as Active as You Can

A regular movement routine can help strengthen your immune system, whether that includes simple exercises done while seated or walking a couple days a week. September leads into the holiday season and can be a busy time of year, but it is important to include physical activity in our lives whenever possible.

