



# Eugene Education Association

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## 4J BENEFITS AND WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Prepared by Julie Wenzl • 541-790-7682 • February 13, 2018 • Issue Number 302

### COLD OR FLU?

Many people wonder, this time of year, if what ails them is a cold or flu. It probably doesn't matter, since not much can be done about either one, but here's a guide to some general differences in their symptoms.

Symptom	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	101-104° for 3-5 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
Aches & pains	Mild	Usual, often severe, affecting large muscles
Fatigue & weakness	Mild	Extreme, up to 2-3 weeks
Stuffy nose	Usual	Sometimes
Nasal congestion & sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Usual	Sometimes
Cough/chest discomfort	Mild	Common, can be severe

A few other things to keep in mind:

- A cold will usually go away on its own within a week. If after a week, your symptoms are severe or persistent, seek medical advice, especially if you have a chronic condition such as asthma.
- The flu typically comes on quickly and hard, as opposed to a nagging cold. If fever persists beyond five days, seek medical advice.
- Both the flu and, more rarely, colds can lead to complications such as bronchitis, sinusitis, or pneumonia.

### QUIZ: WHAT IS YOUR WINTER IQ?

Do you know how to cope with falling temperatures and stay healthy? Some questions have more than one correct answer.

1. True or false: Heart attacks increase in cold winter weather.
2. It's easy to get dehydrated when exercising in cold weather because:
  - a. you lose water from breathing
  - b. you lose water from sweating
  - c. you lose water from stepped-up urine production

- d. the cold impairs the thirst mechanism, so you're likely to drink less
3. True or false: Hot drinks will keep you warm in the cold.
  4. True or false: When dressing for cold weather, you should opt for cotton clothing.
  5. You burn more calories when you are cold because:
    - a. your metabolic rate speeds up
    - b. you shiver
    - c. your brain needs more calories when it is cold
    - d. cold temperature activates brown fat
  6. True or false: If you regularly spend time in cold weather, you'll adapt to it.
  7. A humidifier can do which of the following:
    - a. prevent or alleviate dry skin
    - b. ease symptoms of a cold
    - c. pollute the air
    - d. allow you to lower your thermostat
  8. Which are two of the most basic and effective ingredients in moisturizers?
    - a. collagen
    - b. glycerin
    - c. petroleum jelly
    - d. aloe
  9. True or false: Cold weather can make arthritis worse.

### Answers:

1. True. Studies have found that cold weather increases the rate of heart attacks as well as strokes, especially in older people with cardiovascular disease. Cold temperatures can increase blood pressure and the tendency of blood to clot as well as stimulate production of stress hormones. In particular, sudden drops in temperature or barometric pressure (as before the onset of a storm) appear to increase the risk. Frigid damp weather is generally riskier in regions where people are not used to cold weather than in places like Canada or Siberia. Dressing warmly may actually help save the lives of people at high risk for heart attack.
2. All. As in the heat, you should make sure to drink plenty of fluids when exercising or working in cold weather.

3. False. A hot drink will have little or no effect on body temperature, though it may make you feel warmer initially and can warm your hands when you hold it. You would have to drink a quart or more of hot liquid in a short time to affect body heat significantly.
4. False. Cotton is a poor insulator when wet from sweat or precipitation. The key to staying warm is layering. Next to your skin should be a thin, long-sleeved base layer made of soft wool, silk, or synthetic material, which will keep you warm and help wick away sweat. Over this you can wear a middle layer made of synthetic fleece, thicker wool, or a combination of synthetic and wool. For the outer layer, depending on your activity level, you can wear an insulated zippered coat that you can vent if you become overheated. The outer shell should be wind-proof and waterproof, but breathable.
5. a, b, and d. If you spend most of your time indoors and dress warmly when you go outdoors, you won't need more calories in January than in July. However, if you are exposed to cold temperature and are inadequately dressed for it, you will shiver, which increases internal heat production and burns lots of calories. Even before you reach the point of shivering, you'll start to burn extra calories because your metabolic rate will increase to compensate for your body's loss of heat. Moreover, research suggests that prolonged exposure to cold stimulates brown fat, which is more metabolically active than regular fat, so it burns more calories.
6. True. But the human body doesn't adapt nearly as well to the cold as it does to the heat. It can take weeks to adapt to the cold, and even then the acclimatization is modest. Over time, heat loss through the skin is lessened, for instance, and shivering starts at a lower body temperature. If you regularly ski, skate, or hike in the cold, you may notice some gradual acclimatization. This usually takes about two to four weeks of frequent exposure, though in some people it occurs in just a few days, and in others (notably many older people) acclimatization never occurs.
7. All. Adequate indoor humidity (25 to 50 percent) can help prevent or alleviate dry skin, eyes and nasal passages. Since you feel warmer in warm humid air than in dry air, you can keep your thermostat lower, which also helps prevent dry skin. A humidifier can ease symptoms of a cold, since cold dry air dries mucus, making it harder to clear from your nasal passages, while moist air helps loosen it. However, if not kept clean, humidifiers can be a source of indoor air pollution, microbes, and allergens. And if your water contains contaminants such as lead, the humidifier will spray them into the air.
8. b. and c. Petroleum jelly is an emollient that helps prevent the evaporation of moisture from the skin. Glycerin is a humectant, meaning it attracts moisture and holds it against the skin. Collagen is a protein in healthy skin, but rubbing it on won't help, since your skin can't absorb it. Research on aloe gel as a treatment for various skin conditions has been inconsistent. In any case, nearly all commercial aloe lotions contain very little pure aloe. In general, expensive moisturizers are a waste of money.
9. True, at least indirectly. If the inclement weather keeps you inside and thus prevents you from exercising, inactivity can worsen arthritis symptoms. For instance, a study from Northwestern University published a few years ago found that people with osteoarthritis living in the Chicago area averaged three more hours a day of sedentary time in winter than in summer. Many people think that cold, damp weather itself worsens arthritis symptoms, but studies on this have had inconsistent results.

## 4J EMPLOYEE WELLNESS FAIR

Thanks to all the vendors and participants for making the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual 4J Employee Wellness Fair a success! In addition to the two Lane County Parks Passes and two Pacific Coast Passports given as door prizes, rewards were also offered up by these vendors: Oakway Fitness, Max Muscle, the YMCA, Anytime Fitness, Eugene Yoga, Run Hub, Willamette Dental, Reliant Behavioral Health, Body Fit Meals, Healthy Team Healthy U, Moda Health, and In Shape Fitness. Along with the prizes, many of the vendors also had small items to hand out so there was plenty of swag to be had!

Congratulations to prize winners Teresa Blanton, Tracy Collier, Ariana Landeros, Eloise Mueller, Teresa Mueller, Mimi Nollo, Mel Olin, Maria Olono, Jasmin Quitta-Vetro, Ann Richer, Rena Robbins, Brian Watson, Carol Welch, and Brandeis Zaklan.