

Foods and drinks to avoid when sick

Cold and flu season is here, and paying attention to what you eat when you have a runny nose can go a long way toward keeping you healthy. Here are some foods that can make your symptoms worse when you're sick.

Flu season is here, and paying attention to what you eat when you have a runny nose can go a long way toward keeping you healthy. " *Maintaining good nutrition when you have the flu will ensure your body has the energy it needs to heal,* " explains Dana Henderson, a dietitian at LA Care Health Plan.



' *Eating provides calories, which are the energy your body needs to fight off illness,* ' she says. Henderson recommends eating foods rich in antioxidants, such as fruits and vegetables, to help fight infection and stay hydrated. But what you don't eat is just as important to your recovery rate, experts say. Here are **the foods that can worsen your symptoms when you're sick** .

Spicy food

Until you feel better, it's best to limit salt and spices, says Dr. Neil Patel, a family medicine physician at Providence St. Joseph Hospital in Orange County, California. "*Increasing spices can upset your digestive system, causing diarrhea or worsening symptoms when you're sick,*" he says.

Caffeine

When you're already feeling under the weather, giving up your morning coffee might be too much to ask. But in the long run, it might just make you feel better, Henderson explains. Caffeine can disrupt sleep, which is crucial

for recovery and immune function. Caffeine is a diuretic, so it can exacerbate any underlying dehydration.



Alcohol

Like caffeine, alcohol can cause dehydration, slow wound healing, and cause muscle aches. Even if you feel better and want to have a drink with friends, it is best to wait until you are fully recovered. Dehydration can be serious and can lead to hospitalization. Staying hydrated is extremely important, especially when you have a cold or flu.

Foods high in fat

Foods high in fat or saturated fat take a lot of energy and water to process in the body, which can take energy away from the immune system. What's more, these foods can increase inflammation and worsen symptoms like stuffy nose and sore throat, according to Henderson.



Road

Ice cream may seem soothing to your throat when you eat it, but processed sugars can actually worsen symptoms. '*Sugary foods can temporarily increase inflammation, making symptoms like stuffy nose and sore throat worse and slightly impairing the immune response*,' says Henderson.

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