

Natural Health Tips for Kids & Teens

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Your body's got your back!

The power to stay healthy is already inside you. Have you ever thought of yourself as a Formula 1 car? Well, maybe you should. Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes can reach speeds of over 200mph and keep going for about 200 miles!

But it can only do that because the mechanics have been working behind the scenes, making sure that the engine is well-oiled, the parts are all working properly and the best fuel is in the tank.

Your body is way more complex and impressive than Lewis' Merc. But you also need to put the right fuel in and make sure all your parts are in top condition if you're going to be the best you can be.

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The good news is that it doesn't need a team of engineers to get you there, and it's really not hard. We've put together five simple steps to good, natural health that will mean you always come out on top.

Remember: Your immune system is still developing

Just as exercising your muscles keeps them healthy, exposing your immune system to different microorganisms makes it better at protecting you. It boosts the innate immunity that you're born with, and makes your body even better at fighting off colds, flu and other viruses.

Being too clean – constantly sterilizing your hands, for example – is not only terrible for your skin but can actually make you more unhealthy.

Like everything in life, balance is the key.

Look after your immune system – It makes S.E.N.S.E.

Guess what has kept you healthy and alive for your whole life?

Your natural immune system! It's working 24/7, 365 with no lunch breaks, days off or afternoon naps.

It's doing its thing even as you read this, and it's the result of millions of years of evolution and learning how to deal with all sorts of bugs, bacteria and microbes.

So what about Covid? Some people have got really sick and even died.

Good question.

Most people who die from Covid are very old (85 or over) AND sick (87.2%) – the most common illnesses are all usually the result of an unhealthy lifestyle: Obesity, Diabetes and High Blood Pressure.

If you're old and already struggling with your health, then something like Covid, flu or even a cold can become a serious problem.

If you're young and healthy, however, then getting really sick from Covid is very rare. It is so rare that the ones who do suffer are often reported on in newspapers – but we mustn't let those stories (when we probably don't know all the details) distract us from the facts and figures we know about young people and Covid.

Your body will usually brush off these sorts of infections without much of a problem.

But there's always room for improvement!!

Prevention is better than cure

If you start making SENSE now, these habits will serve you well for the rest of your life and will help you stay healthy, even in YOUR old age.

It's time to make your body the ultimate virus-fighting machine

Your body wants to be healthy, and it knows what to do to survive. Just think about how it can repair itself after cuts, scrapes and even broken bones – you don't have to think about doing it, it just does it!

Looking after it makes SENSE. Here are five natural health tips for kids and teens to start working on today:

S – Sleep

Most of us need between 7 and 9 hours of sleep every night to feel our best. Your body goes into repair mode when you're sleeping, and if you're sleep-deprived then you're more likely to get sick. A lack of sleep can also lead to hormone imbalances and weight gain.



Top tip: Give yourself the best chance of a good night's sleep by properly winding down before bed. Turn your phone off an hour before you go to sleep. And don't eat or drink for a couple of hours before bedtime – you want your body to be doing other things, not digesting your dinner, while you sleep.

E – Exercise

You don't have to join a gym and blow loads of money on the right clothes. Just get off the sofa and use your body. Walking, dancing, housework – they all count. Even just standing up is better than sitting down. Try to mix exercise that gets your heart rate up, exercise to build strength, and exercise for relaxation such as yoga.



Top tip: If you can get outside, that's even better. Your body makes vitamin D from sunshine (see 'Nutrition' below) and fresh, oxygen-rich air is vital for your brain to work properly and all our health. Being around nature is great for your mood and your immune system. The Japanese call it 'forest bathing' – go hug a tree on your next walk. And take off the mask – it can reduce oxygen intake by 20%!

N – Nutrition

A balanced diet contains all the things your body needs: protein, fats, carbohydrates and all the essential vitamins and minerals.

About 70% of your immune system is in your gut. So you really need to take care of it, and eating a wide range of colourful vegetables is the best way to do that (sorry, chips don't count!). Go easy on processed foods, sugar and sweeteners: they may taste delicious, but they're not your friends.

Most of the nutrition we need can be found in a healthy, balanced diet, but sometimes taking vitamin and mineral supplements can be a good idea.

During the autumn and winter, we're more likely to encounter nasty bugs (including Covid), so this is a time when supporting our natural defences is even more important.

There are a few vitamins and minerals that are super important for this:

Vitamin C – Naturally found in broccoli, citrus fruits, kiwis, kale, peppers. Not only essential for your immune system but also for the growth and repair of your body.

Vitamin D – It's called the 'Sunshine Vitamin' because our bodies can actually make it out of sunshine! In the summer, when we're outside more, our vitamin D levels are usually not a problem, but as it gets colder and the days get shorter they start dropping. If you can't get sunshine on your skin, taking a supplement is a good idea. This is especially important for those with darker skins who absorb less from sunlight.

Zinc – Naturally found in meat, shellfish, eggs, seeds, nuts and pulses. It keeps the cells of your immune system in good shape. It's known as a 'micronutrient' because you only need a tiny amount, but a little goes a long way!



Top tip: *Hate salads? Then don't eat salads. Roast or stir-fry your veg, dip it into stuff, turn it into soup. Make it tasty, so you'll keep eating it.*

S – Stress

Stress has been called 'the health epidemic of the twenty-first century'. If you don't deal with it now, you'll pay for it later. So do what you can to reduce stress – spend time with the people you love, laugh, have a break from your phone, turn off the news, read a book, or take a few minutes just to breathe fresh air properly.



Top tip: Try to find a stress reliever that works for you – it might be meditation, massage, tapping, yoga, breathwork, or just a walk. Keep trying different things until you find one that sticks. And if you need a bit more help to deal with stress, then check out Kooth.com. It's a free service for young people where you can chat anonymously with counsellors.

E – Embrace

Hugging releases the hormone Oxytocin, which is linked to a lower risk of disease. You'll be sharing microbes which will 'exercise' your immunity, oh and it just feels good! One of the worst things about the past few years has been the physical separation – it's just not natural for human beings to stay away from each other. So you're hugging for health too.



Top tip: Some people really have been left quite afraid of hugging, after all this time. It's time for you to lead the way and show them there's nothing to fear – bring back hugging!

Your body's always been there for you. If you take care of it, it won't let you down.

So show it some love. You won't regret it.

Want to read more about how to optimize your natural immunity? [Check out the WCH guide on how to optimize your immune system.](#)


Safer to Wait
Protecting Children's Health

This resource was prepared by Safer to Wait. Find this resource and learn more about Safer to Wait [on their website](#).



5 easy things you can do today

Design by Emma, age 8

As we head into the winter when colds, bugs and the flu become more common, the best and safest way to protect ourselves from getting sick is to make sure our amazing natural defences are running at full power...

...and that just takes a bit of **S.E.N.S.E!**

S **Sleep.** Our body repairs and regenerates when we sleep. We should have at least 8 hours a night so our body has time to do everything it needs to.

E **Exercise.** What you don't use, you lose! Working our heart and muscles every day keeps them strong and healthy.

N **Nutrition.** A balanced diet of vitamins, minerals, fats, carbs and proteins is essential. Our body also creates vitamin D when we get sunshine on our skin! In winter when it's darker and we spend more time inside, it's a good idea to take a supplement, especially for those with darker skin.

S **Stress.** It's super important to make time to properly rest and relax, because too much stress can be really harmful. Regularly take breaks from social media, switch off your phone and do something that recharges YOUR battery.

E **Embrace.** Hugging and just hanging out with friends and family (in real life!) feels good, builds our 'adaptive immunity' (by sharing bugs and microbes) and actually releases stress reducing hormones (and you thought it was just good fun!).

Learn more - safertowait.com/natural-health-kids

Your body's amazing,
so show it some love,
you won't regret it!

#SENSE

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