Give your immune system a shot in the arm

Getting a flu shot is only one way to boost your immune system in its fight against viruses and bacteria that may make you sick. There are other things you can do to help your body stay healthy this winter:

1. **Eat a healthy diet** with lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and less saturated fat.
2. **Get a good night’s sleep.** 7-8 hours is best.
3. **Try to lower your stress level.** Stress hormones can work against your body’s efforts to keep itself healthy. Attend the CopaSWAbana Winter Health Fair and pick up a Calm Kit, or visit the SHAC website (go.carleton.edu/shac) for downloadable MP3s offering relaxation techniques.
4. **Get regular exercise.** Hit the Rec Center, the skating rink, or take a snowy hike through the Arb.
5. **Stay positive.** Look for the silver lining. Studies have shown that when we’re worried and feeling gloomy, our immune system slows down and becomes less effective.
6. **Wash your hands**, often and thoroughly.
7. **Get all recommended vaccines**, specifically a seasonal flu shot. (If you haven’t already done so, get your flu shot at the CopSWAbana Winter Health Fair on Wednesday, January 13, from 4:30-7:30 PM in Great Hall.)

What about extra vitamins and supplements when you feel a cold coming on? Taking large doses of a single vitamin or supplement has not been shown to help the immune system. Trying to boost the immune system in this way is very complicated because the immune system itself is so complex. Scientists don’t yet know which cells should be boosted and how much.


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“**At the copa, copaSWAbana…!**”

The Student Wellness Advocates (SWAs) are teaming up with a number of campus groups to create a fun, relaxing oasis in the midst of the January cold. Come to Great Hall on Wednesday, January 13, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. and experience it for yourself. Visit the SHAC table to test your knowledge of health topics and SHAC services. Take home one of our new Calm Kits or the ever-popular Flu Kit. There will even be an opportunity to get your flu shot! The cost is $35, payable with Schillers, student account, or credit card.
**Hey, SHAC, I think I might have pink eye!**

During cold and flu season, this is what we often hear on the other end of the phone line. Having to pry your eyes open in the morning and seeing how red and matterly they look can be a little scary. But conjunctivitis, or pink eye, is one of the most common eye conditions in children and adults. **Most cases of pink eye are mild and get better on their own, even without treatment.**

There are four main causes of pink eye: viruses, bacteria, allergens (like pet dander or dust mites), and irritants (such as smog or chlorine). It can be difficult to determine the exact cause of pink eye because some signs and symptoms may be the same no matter the cause. The symptoms of pink eye may vary depending on the cause but usually include:

- Redness or swelling of the white of the eye or inside the eyelids
- Increased amount of tears
- White, yellow or green eye discharge
- Itchy, irritated, and/or burning eyes
- Increased sensitivity to light
- Gritty feeling in the eye
- Crusting of the eyelids or lashes

When these symptoms accompany the common cold, they will likely improve without treatment as the cold gets better. However, there are times when it is important to see a healthcare provider. You should see a healthcare provider if you have pink eye along with any of the following:

- Moderate to severe pain in your eye(s)
- Sensitivity to light or blurred vision
- Intense redness in the eye(s)
- A weakened immune system, for example from HIV or cancer treatment
- Symptoms that get worse or don't improve, including bacterial pink eye that does not improve after 24 hours of antibiotic use

Like colds and coughs, pink eye caused by a virus or bacteria is very contagious and spreads easily and quickly from person to person. You can reduce the risk of getting or spreading pink eye and other cold symptoms by following some simple self-care steps:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough. Try coughing into your elbow!
- Avoid touching or rubbing your eyes.
- Avoid sharing eye and face makeup, makeup brushes, contact lenses and containers, and eyeglasses.

Adapted from “Pink Eye: Usually Mild and Easy to Treat”, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 05 May 2015. Web. 30 Nov. 2015.

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**TAO: Another kind of therapy**

Student Health and Counseling is offering a new service to students seeking counseling. TAO (Therapist Assisted Online) is an interactive, web-based program that provides assistance to help overcome anxiety and depression. After being screened by one of SHAC’s counselors, participants watch videos, complete exercises, and track their mood. Daily practice logs help clients to reinforce and practice the skills throughout the week. Students meet weekly with a SHAC counselor via video conferencing for a 10-15 minute consultation regarding their progress.

TAO offers the opportunity for daily, brief intervention, learning, and practice that students can complete anytime day or night. This method can provide a convenient alternative to weekly or bi-weekly in-person therapy sessions for some students. According to the TAO website, “The TAO therapy model has been validated with over 100 studies in 20 countries and has been shown to be highly effective.”

Students learn a variety of skills including mindfulness meditation, relaxation strategies, how to challenge cognitive distortion, positive psychology skills, and much more through the highly-engaging interactive modules in TAO. Please contact SHAC for more information.

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**Fall shot clinics draw 287 Carls**