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Tips for Naturally Healthy Holidays

Visiting Relatives. Sugary Foods. Crowded Stores. Shopping Mania.

Sound familiar? Holidays are fun and stressful. Holiday stress, unfortunately, can lower our immune system and make us more susceptible to the kind of health episodes we all want to avoid.

Keeping children healthy during the holiday season is especially important and can benefit the entire family.

Here are some helpful tips for keeping your family healthy during the upcoming holiday season, courtesy of Bionorica USA (www.bionoricausa.com), maker of safe and effective all-natural herbal remedies and pediatrician Dr. Bob Sears, co-author of the Sears Parenting Library Series.

Be extra clean. A houseful of company, kids home from school, and extra activity can create more than just a mess. Put out plenty of hand sanitizers and wipes for everyone and set an example of thorough and frequent hand washing. Have plenty of tissues available and easy to access wastebaskets to throw them away. Wipe down surfaces frequently.

Look for natural health support. Supporting the immune system, especially for children, is especially important during the holidays. Look for natural, plant-based natural remedies and choose only products with a proven track record for safety and effectiveness and no harmful side effects.

Teach children healthy habits. To avoid spreading germs, teach children to sneeze into their sleeve or a tissue, and how to (politely!) avoid sharing drinks, eating utensils, school supplies or toys with other kids. Make sure everyone has their own cup, plate, silverware and napkin.

Streamline your holiday diet. Holiday meals usually feature rich foods, lots of starches, and sugary treats. These foods in excess can weaken the immune system. Re-think your traditional menus and look for ways to include seasonal fruits and vegetables. Make simple vegetable and fruit dishes instead of those with high fat or rich sauces. Monitor the desserts and sweets–serve small portions, and control the supply!

Watch rich and sugary drinks as well. Beverages are a big part of holiday cheer, but try to limit sugary drinks to special treats, perhaps in lieu of a dessert or other snack. Promote plain water for thirst, as well as herbal teas.

Practice new "terms of endearment." The gentle "fist bump" – making a fist and touching knuckles – is less like to spread germs than closer hugs and kisses. Model the types of

greetings you want your family to exchange. If you have children or relatives who like to give mouth kisses, talk to them in advance and suggest alternatives.

Don't turn Into couch potatoes! Exercise is another big booster to the immune system. While it may be tempting to hang out in front of the TV or game console, plan something each day that gets the kids active and outside (weather permitting) or choose an indoor athletic activity.

Be regular with multivitamins. Be sure to start your day by giving your kids an all-natural, dye- and preservative-free daily multivitamin. It's a good way to ensure kids get all the essential nutrients they may not get through diet alone.

Read the directions on children's health products. Be sure to read the directions on any over-the-counter (OTC) product; reported complications have occurred when:

- Children are given more than one medication;
- Multiple medications with too much of the same or similar active ingredients;
- Dosage directions are not properly followed.

When traveling, watch the air quality and temperature. Winter air can be drier; moist air is healthier to breathe. Using a nasal saline solution can help keep air passages moist, as well as using natural products that support respiratory function. And when traveling, keep up the clean habits!

Keep the air moist and warm at home, too. Run a vaporizer or humidifier in your child's room at night, or take a steamy shower twice a day. Viruses thrive in dry conditions, and dry winter air parches mucus membranes.

Don't take a vacation from sleep. As the days get shorter and the nights longer, we all need more sleep. Over the holidays, kids are off school and may want to stay up late. Make sure they consistently get at least 8 to 10 hours of quality sleep.

Isolate the bugs. Having a child who doesn't feel well during the holidays is no fun for anyone. Take steps to make sure the illness doesn't spread – cleaning surfaces, not sharing food or drink, having extra immune-building foods and practices. When children must be separated from other family members, provide them with extra videos, games, and "mommy time" to make it easier. Experts recommend waiting a full day after symptoms disappear before sending a child back to school or play.

More information about Bionorica and its products can be found at www.bionoricausa.com.