



## IS IT A COLD OR ALLERGIES?

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## Know the Difference

You're feeling crummy, with sneezing, sniffles, post-nasal drip... is it a cold, or are your allergies flaring up? It can be hard to tell them apart because they share so many symptoms.

Colds are caused by viruses and can lead to a runny/stuffy nose, congestion, cough and sore throat. (Note: The flu can also cause similar symptoms, but it also often comes with a high fever that lasts for three to four days, along with headache, fatigue and general aches and pain. These symptoms are less common when you have a cold.)

Allergies aren't caused by a virus. They occur when your body's immune system reacts to a trigger, or allergen, to which you are allergic. If you have allergies and you breathe in things such as pollen or pet dander, the immune cells in your nose and

airways may overreact to these harmless substances. Your delicate respiratory tissues may then swell, and your nose may become stuffy or runny. Allergies also can cause itchy, watery eyes, which you don't normally have with a cold.

Allergy symptoms usually last as long as you're exposed to the allergen, which may be about six weeks during pollen seasons in the spring, summer or fall. Colds rarely last beyond two weeks. Check with your doctor if symptoms last beyond 10 days or if symptoms aren't relieved by over-the-counter medicines.

*Source: National Institutes of Health*



## Herbal Supplements

### Can They Interact with Your Medications?

Many Americans take both herbal supplements and prescription or over-the-counter drugs. Herbal supplements, like drugs, may interact with other drugs, food, and laboratory measurements.

Sometimes, taking a drug and a supplement together may increase the drug's effect, causing unwanted side effects. Sometimes, taking a drug and a supplement together may decrease the drug's effect. This means you aren't getting the full benefit from the drug.

For example, St. John's wort interacts with many medica-

tions. In most instances, it speeds up the processes that change the drug into inactive substances, leading to a decrease in drug levels in your body. It interacts with some drugs in other ways. For example, taking St. John's wort with certain types of antidepressants can cause harmful side effects.

To help avoid possible harmful interactions, talk with your doctor or pharmacist about all supplements and drugs you take.

*Sources: National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health; National Institutes of Health*

## Could It Be Strep Throat?

### Only a Strep Test Will Tell for Sure

Strep throat is a bacterial infection in the throat and tonsils. The bacteria are spread through contact with droplets after an infected person coughs or sneezes.

If you touch your mouth, nose or eyes after touching something that has these droplets on it, you may become ill.

The most common symptoms of strep throat include sore throat; fever; red, swollen tonsils (sometimes with white streaks or pus); tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth; and swollen lymph nodes in the front of the neck.

Your doctor can test for strep by swabbing the throat to quickly see if group A strep bacteria are causing the sore throat. A strep test is needed to tell if you have strep throat or if it may be a case of viral sore throat, which resolves on its own. (Note: antibiotics are not useful for viral illnesses.) Just looking at your throat is not enough to make a diagnosis. If the test is positive for strep, your doctor can prescribe antibiotics.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## April Is Foot Health Awareness Month

### Time for a Foot Checkup

In celebration of Foot Health Awareness Month, check your feet and ankles at home using these simple steps:

- **Skin:** Check each foot for calluses, blisters or irritation. Now put your hand inside your shoe. Are there seams, tacks or rough places in the shoe that correspond to the areas of irritation, calluses or blisters?
- **Flexibility:** To test ankle flexibility, hang your heel over the edge of a stair while standing on the stair facing the stair. Let the heel go below the level of the stair. If this causes pain, stop the test. If your heel goes below the level of the stair without causing strain in your calf, that is excel-

lent. If there is some strain, this can be improved with flexibility exercises.

- **Balance:** Stand on one foot, with your arms out to the side and your eyes closed. If you are less than 30 years old, you should be able to balance for 15 seconds; 30 to 40 years old for 12 seconds; 40 to 50 years old for 10 seconds; and over 50 years old for 7 seconds. This can be improved with balance exercises.

*Source: American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society*





## Rx Gourmet

Your Prescription for Healthy Eating  
Heart Healthy, Diabetes Friendly — and Delicious!

If you're looking for pure comfort-food nostalgia, you'll enjoy these meatloaf stuffed peppers. Serve with veggies on the side.

### Turkey Meatloaf Stuffed Peppers

Serves 6

3 large bell peppers (red, green or yellow)	1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1 pound ground turkey (93.7% lean)	1/2 teaspoon salt
1 egg, lightly beaten	1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 cup very finely minced sweet onion	1/3 cup Panko crumbs or other bread crumbs
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce	Additional catsup and 2% cheese, shredded (optional)
1/4 cup natural catsup (no corn syrup)	



Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Wash peppers and remove the core and tops from the peppers. Save tops. Mix together ground turkey, egg, onion, Worcestershire sauce, catsup, garlic powder, salt, black pepper and bread crumbs. Mix well until fully combined. Stuff peppers with turkey mixture. Set top lightly on top of filling as shown. Bake at 350 degrees F for 55 minutes.

If desired, remove from the oven the last 5 minutes of cooking and top each with a small amount of shredded 2% cheese or a teaspoon of catsup, placed on top of filling. Return to oven for the remaining 5 minutes. Serve warm.

**Per serving:** (One half pepper equals one serving and does not include added catsup or cheese.) 186 Calories; 7g Fat (47.2% calories from fat); 2g Saturated Fat; 3g Protein; 14g Carbohydrate; 17g Dietary Fiber; 89mg Cholesterol; 390mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain (Starch); 0 Lean Meat; 1 1/2 Vegetable; 0 Fat; 0 Other Carbohydrates.

*Recipe is low fat, low calorie and diabetic friendly.*

*NOTE: If you are cooking gluten free, you can substitute grated Parmesan for the bread crumbs.*

*Recipe courtesy of LowFatLifestyle.com. Visit them on the web and get more free recipes and healthy-cooking tips at LowFatLifestyle.com.*



## Medicine Cabinet Update

### Keep a Medication Checklist

Keeping track of your medicines is important. Making sure they are stored properly, that they have not expired, and that prescriptions are refilled requires time and attention. Also, taking a number of different medications at the same time, correctly, can be difficult. It can be hard to remember what each drug is for, when you should take it and how you should take it. However, there are simple strategies you can use to help you manage your medicines wisely:

- **Keep a checklist of all your prescription and over-the-counter medications.** For each medicine, list the amount you take, the time of day you take it and whether it should be taken with food. Store two copies of the list: one on the refrigerator door or where your medications are stored, and one in your wallet or purse.
- **Review your medication record at every doctor visit and whenever your doctor prescribes a new medicine.** Your doctor may have new information about your medicines that might be important. Whenever possible, have your doctor or pharmacist write down advice and instructions (which may go beyond what is printed on the label) for taking each medication. Add this information to your checklist or keep it with the checklist.

*Source: NIH Senior Health*

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**Senior Health**

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a nutrient needed for health and to maintain strong bones. It helps the body absorb calcium (one of bone's main building blocks) from food and supplements. It is found in fatty fish such as salmon and tuna, fortified breakfast cereals, fortified milk, beef liver, eggs, cheese, and mushrooms, among other foods. The body makes vitamin D when skin is directly exposed to the sun, and most people meet at least some of their vitamin D needs this way. It is also available in supplements.

Muscles need vitamin D to move, nerves need it to carry messages between the brain and every body part, and the immune system needs it to fight off invading bacteria and viruses. Together with calcium, vitamin D also helps protect older adults from osteoporosis.

The amount you need each day depends on your age. Average daily recommended amounts from the Food and Nutrition Board for different ages are listed below in International Units (IU):

Life Stage	Recommended Amount
Birth to 12 months	400 IU
Children 1–13 years	600 IU
Teens 14–18 years	600 IU
Adults 19–70 years	600 IU
Adults 71 years and older	800 IU
Pregnant and breastfeeding women	600 IU

Source: National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements

**DID YOU KNOW?**



**Athlete's Foot**

Athlete's foot is a skin infection of the feet that can be caused by different fungi. Although it can affect any portion of the foot, the space between the toes is most common. Athlete's foot is typically characterized by red, itchy skin fissures or scales. It is different from just dry, flaky skin, which usually doesn't have the redness component and the same level of itchiness. Sometimes a rash or blisters may appear.

If you have athlete's foot, keep feet clean, dry and cool. Wear sandals when possible and air out shoes between wearing. Over-the-counter anti-fungal products may help. If athlete's foot continues, see your doctor.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention