

It's that sickly time of year

About a month ago I got my yearly flu shot. Never missed one since getting to the Naval Academy in 1997. That is, until 2004. Silly me didn't know I could get my shot for free at the VA hospital as I was still new to the process. But I thought I would be fine.

Famous last words!

In January 2005, while substituting a middle school math class, I knew I was sick. A quick trip to the school nurse confirmed I was sick with the flu.

What?

Yes, the one and only time I've had the flu and I was out for two weeks.

You might be asking, what happened this year to make me want to write about it?

I got the flu shot only a couple of weeks before I tend to experience my usual fall sinus infection.

Yes, I've got those some times as well!

I decided to make this year different, so I pulled out all the stops I had in my bag of tricks. Hopefully, these tips will help you brave the season!

1. Hydration!

This should go without saying, but, we must keep drinking water. As the temperature drops and we turn up the heat, we also dry out the air, thus drying our bodies. You don't have to drink cold water. Hot water is good for you as well (but an acquired taste). Room temperature is fine as well. Just drink the water!

2. Care for some tea?

My top two tea recommendations are ginger and peppermint. The ginger helps with upset stomachs and other digestive issues, while the peppermint can help soothe the stomach and clear stuffy noses. You can make your own tea with pieces of ginger root and dried mint leaves. Or you can buy pre-made tea bags. Try this before you reach for that next bottle of ginger ale!

3. Get some sleep!

I know, there's work to be done, meals to cook, kids to care for and tons of other demands on our time and energy. But if you aren't getting sufficient shut eye, you're setting yourself up for a lower functioning immune system and illness is right around the corner. You're no good to anyone if you're sick, so please take care of yourself! I know it's hard, and it may require saying "no" to some things, but it will be better for you and everyone else in the long run.



(Image Credit: <https://www.ct.gov/dph>)

Using the above tips, and a few others, I have managed to stave off the October sinus infection and I am still flu-free.

But that brings me to one last reminder: if you're sick, do your best to stay home, especially if you don't know if what you have is contagious. You get excused from Mass for that!

Leave a comment below and tell me what you do to stay illness free!

For more tips, [click here](#).