

CLUELESS BRITS CATCH A COLD WHEN IT COMES TO STAYING HEALTHY

Submitted by: Richmond Towers Communications

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Despite suffering from an average of two bouts of cold or flu each year – or 160 over the course of a lifetime – many of us remain clueless when it comes to knowing how best to avoid, and treat, the common cold, according to the findings of a new study by Fisherman's Friend.

The survey of 2,000 adults throughout the UK found that old wives' tales about colds, their causes, and how to treat them, continue to abound, with common misconceptions still very much the order of the day.

More than one in four of those surveyed swear by the old adage that it's good to sweat a cold out, for example by wearing lots of layers in bed or sticking your head over a bowl of steaming water. However, both are completely ineffective as remedies, although they might make you feel a little better and alleviate some of the symptoms.

Likewise, four out of 10 of us believe that taking lots of Vitamin C and zinc can help cure a cold, or even stave it off in the first place – again wrong. If you come into direct contact with the virus then it's almost certainly going to get you, no matter how fit or healthy you are.

And as Valentine's Day approaches, results show that more than one in three of us incorrectly believe kissing is one of the most sure-fire ways to spread a cold – but it's not the kiss that causes the cold, it's the coincidental, and often accidental, exchanging of nose mucus that spreads the dreaded virus.

Almost one in six of us even believe that some people are prone to catching flu from the flu jab – which is actually impossible as the vaccine includes only components of the virus, and not a complete version of it.

Perhaps worst of all, almost one in five of us incorrectly believe that you shouldn't actually treat the symptoms of a cold, and that if you let a cold get on with its business then it will be over all the sooner.

"Our study shows how misconceptions about how best to treat the common cold, or how best to avoid it all together, continue to abound," says Fisherman's Friend's colds expert Rob Metcalfe. "The reality is that there is little we can do to cure a cold, but we can alleviate the symptoms, which makes the cold more bearable and will also reduce the chance of spreading it, for example through infected mucus."

The survey also shows how far some of us will go to try and make sure we stay cold free. Four out of 10 correctly identified that regularly washing hands was a good way to avoid the virus, while more than one in 20 said they tried not to leave the house whenever they were aware a cold was doing the rounds.

Almost one in 10 said they always refused to meet up with friends or family members suffering from a cold or flu. And one in four said they didn't do anything to avoid catching a cold or flu, accepting that there is little they can do to avoid them.

FISHERMAN'S FRIEND'S GUIDE TO THE TOP 10 MYTHS ABOUT THE COMMON COLD:

1. OUT IN THE COLD

You catch a cold when you come into contact with the cold virus, rather than because you've been outside in the cold. It doesn't matter if you are hot, cold, warm, or dry when the virus strikes.

2. FLU SHOTS

One in six of us actually believe that you can catch flu from the flu injection because of the common misconception that the flu vaccine contains a weakened form of the flu virus. In fact, it only includes components of the virus and so it is actually impossible to catch flu from a flu jab.

3. IMMUNE SYSTEM

Contrary to popular belief, a weakened immune system does not heighten the risks of catching a cold. Healthy and unhealthy people exhibit the same amount of susceptibility to colds.

4. TAKE LOTS OF VITAMIN C

It is a myth that loads of Vitamin C and zinc help to stave off (or cure) a cold. While it is often a good idea to take vitamin and mineral supplements, they have no effect on the cold virus. You are better off managing the symptoms of the cold as best you can and sitting it out.

5. MOST COLDS ARE CAUGHT IN WINTER

Actually, most colds are caught in Spring and Autumn when the virus is at its most active.

6. SWEAT IT OUT

It's commonly believed that covering up with extra blankets or sticking your head over a bowl of hot water will help sweat the cold out. Sadly, it doesn't work, although it may make you feel better as it addresses the symptoms.

7. MILKING IT

A lot of people think that drinking milk while you have a cold is a bad idea because it causes more mucus to build up. Actually, milk does not cause a build up of mucus at all – you can drink as much of it as you like and it will have no effect on your cold.

8. KISSING

The quantity of virus on the lips and mouth is tiny, and a much larger dose would be required to become infected. It is the nasal mucus we all have to worry about.

9. COLD SYMPTOMS

One in five of us believe that the symptoms of a cold (running nose, coughing etc.) should go untreated, so the cold plays itself out more quickly. In reality, the symptoms not only make no difference to the duration of the cold, they can help spread the bug to other people – through nose blowing and coughing. You should take comfort in knowing that pain killers and other cold medicines will not only make the illness more tolerable, they will help to keep it contained.

10. STARVE A FEVER

We've all heard the phrase "starve a fever, feed a cold." However, eating has no negative impact on the body when you are sick. In fact, the opposite is true. Food provides the body with fuel to cope with illness.

- Ends -

Source: Statistics taken from a poll of 2,000 UK adults, OnePoll research – December 2012

Notes to editors:

- Fisherman's Friend contains menthol and eucalyptus, in fact, a third more menthol than its rivals. For years, menthol and eucalyptus have been used to keep airwaves clear and breath fresh. Menthol is also widely used to treat colds, as it provides rapid relief from a blocked nose.
- Fisherman's Friend's retails at 73p for a 25g packet or £1.39 for a 45g box, and is available in leading independent and multiple grocers, pharmacies, newsagents, convenience stores and forecourts.

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