

# How to stay healthy in changing weather conditions

March 14 2024, by Deb Balzer, Mayo Clinic News Network

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The weather can be unpredictable, especially in late winter. One day it might be sunny and warm, the next day it might be freezing and snowy. How does this changing weather affect your health and well-being? And what can you do to protect yourself from getting sick?

Dr. Tejal Shelat, a Mayo Clinic family medicine resident, says fluctuations in temperature can cause the body temperature to vary as well.

Changes in body temperature and exposure to seasonal viruses make you more susceptible to catching illnesses such as the common cold and flu.

## **Symptoms of respiratory infections**

Dr. Shelat says that these viruses can cause [upper respiratory infections](#), which are characterized by several symptoms:

- Runny nose
- Postnasal drip
- Fevers greater than 100.4 F
- Shortness of breath
- Persistent productive cough

Chest pain when taking in a deep breath may indicate a more serious [infection](#), such as pneumonia.

To prevent or treat these infections, Dr. Shelat recommends boosting your immune system with some simple strategies. The first is to consume enough vitamin C, which is a powerful antioxidant that can help fight off infections.

## **Strategies to stay healthy in changing weather**

- Consume enough vitamin C from fruits or supplements to boost your immune system.
- Exercise regularly, at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week, to improve your blood circulation and cellular function.

- Seek [medical attention](#) if you have a fever above 100.4 F or any severe or persistent symptoms.

"Fruits that are rich in vitamin C, like lemons and oranges, just having one a day or squeezing a few slices of lemon into your water bottle, that might go a long way in protecting your [immune system](#)," Dr. Shelat says. She adds that some people may prefer to take vitamin C and zinc tablets, but a [healthy diet](#) that includes fruits and vegetables is more than adequate.

Another strategy is to exercise regularly, which can improve your [blood circulation](#), oxygen delivery and cellular function. Dr. Shelat says that exercise does not have to be strenuous or time-consuming.

"It could be just a 30-minute walk most days of the week. That gets you to 150 minutes (about 2.5 hours) a week. And that is a good amount of exercise," she says. She also encourages those who enjoy more intense workouts to continue doing them if they are safe and comfortable.

If you experience any severe or persistent symptoms, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

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Citation: How to stay healthy in changing weather conditions (2024, March 14) retrieved 29 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-03-stay-healthy-weather-conditions.html>

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