

Rain doesn't have to mean a washout

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With all the rain of late, many people may be wondering if it's safe to embrace the weather and indulge in activities like playing or exercising in the rain.

"So, rain itself does not make you sick," says Tanner Dunn, D.N.P., a

family nurse practitioner at Mayo Clinic Health System in Holmen, Wisconsin. "However, the effects that rain can have on your body can make you more susceptible to illness."

While getting caught in the rain doesn't directly cause illness, it can lead to a decreased body temperature. This drop in temperature can create an environment where certain bacteria thrive and can weaken your [immune system](#), potentially leading to coldlike symptoms.

Addressing concerns for individuals with immune system issues, Dunn notes that colds are caused by viruses, not by getting wet.

"If you're out in the rain for long periods, especially in very cold conditions, it might affect you. But running errands in the rain here and there doesn't significantly increase your risk," says Dunn.

Regarding hypothermia, Dunn explains, "This time of year, we don't typically see much hypothermia because temperatures are generally warmer. However, in colder months, both the outside temperature and the [water temperature](#) can increase the risk of hypothermia."

For those who need to be outside in the rain, Dunn recommends several practical tips:

- Dress in layers. Use water-repellent outer layers and waterproof footwear to stay dry.
- Dry off promptly. After being in the rain, dry off thoroughly and take a warm shower to help stabilize your body temperature and prevent illness.
- Flood safety. Avoid floodwaters, which can be contaminated and pose hidden hazards. "With the expected heavy rainfall, avoid driving through flooded areas and ensure you're not consuming contaminated water," Dunn advises.

Despite the potential risks, there are positive aspects to being out in the rain.

"Many people find the sound of rain very therapeutic," says Dunn.

"Additionally, exercising in the rain can be beneficial. The rain helps keep you cooler, allowing you to work out longer and more effectively."

Walking in the rain also has respiratory benefits. Rain washes away pollutants and allergens, leaving the air cleaner and potentially improving respiratory health.

"The sound of rain can act as a natural stress reliever, promoting relaxation and improving sleep quality," shares Dunn. "The steady sound of raindrops can provide a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life."

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