



# Winter Wellness

**Campus health experts explain how you can survive the season that keeps on giving.**

The indoor retreat that accompanies winter can yield sedentary lifestyles and germ-y close quarters, meaning your next sick day might be just around the corner. But this advice from Professor of Nursing Claire Lindberg and Adult Nurse Practitioner Barbara Clark can help you avoid—or quickly bounce back from—the season’s most common ailments.

**Common cold** *Cluster of symptoms, from coughing and sneezing to congestion and sore throat*

**Avoid it** Regular hand washing is key, since it’s hard to avoid touching doorknobs and other contaminated surfaces. And keep immunity in tip-top shape by getting plenty of sleep and eating a well-balanced diet, says Clark.

**Bounce back** Antibiotics won’t cure a cold, so soothe symptoms with over-the-counter options. Saline spray can do wonders for congestion, and a steamy shower can thin mucus. For a cough, Lindberg recommends adding honey and lemon to a cup of hot water.

**Flu** *Virus marked by fever, fatigue, chills, and body aches*

**Avoid it** Get your flu shot early in the season, says Clark: “Contrary to the myth, the vaccine cannot cause the flu.”

**Bounce back** Recovery can take a week or more, so plan to rest. “Drink lots of fluids and eat light foods, like chicken soup,” says Lindberg. That can help decrease mucus and open airways.

**Norovirus** *Upset stomach lasting up to three days*

**Avoid it** Norovirus can live on surfaces for weeks, so disinfecting is a must. Don’t share towels if someone’s sick, and keep kids from sharing drinks and forks, says Lindberg.

**Bounce back** Load up on liquids to avoid dehydration, says Clark, even if you have to start with ice chips. “Pedialyte or broths can help replace fluid and electrolytes, but avoid anything sugary, as it can worsen stomach upset,” says Lindberg.

**Seasonal Affective Disorder** *Feelings of depression that arise when the days get shorter*

**Avoid it** “Open blinds, get as much outdoor light as possible, and exercise,” says Clark.

**Bounce back** A tabletop light box can simulate daylight, but consult a doctor if symptoms seem severe.

**Aches and Pains** *Joint discomfort and back pain*

**Avoid it** “Cold weather doesn’t cause pain,” says Lindberg. Not enough outdoor exercise does. “At the root of cold-weather aches and pains is a need for activity.”

**Bounce back** Take a walk. Stretch at your desk. Follow an online yoga tutorial. “Just get moving,” says Lindberg.

—Melissa Kvidahl