



# Ten free “superfoods” growing right in your backyard

*Plus, their simple uses for enriching your health*

In some communities, weedy lawns and gardens are viewed as eyesores. But I see them as a free salad bar.

Since they naturally inhabit your yard, weeds are actually more nutritious than a lot of store-bought vegetables. Especially conventionally grown produce, where most of the nutrients have been “weeded out” after decades of chemical use and soil mismanagement.

When you don't use toxic pesticides in your yard, you create a diverse ecosystem that nourishes humans, animals, insects, bees, and birds. And the so-called “weeds” that flourish in this ecosystem naturally enrich and replenish the soil—meaning you never need to use chemical fertilizers that actually strip away some of the nutrients plants need to thrive.

So this autumn, while you're harvesting the fruits and vegetables you've carefully tended throughout the summer, don't forget about those spontaneous, native-grown plants. They're fresh, free... and right outside your door.

## My 10 favorite uses for these “wonder weeds”



**1. Chickweed** provides many of the minerals Americans typically lack, including calcium, iron, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silica, and zinc.

This member of the carnation family grows in lawns throughout the U.S. It has a delicate flavor, like spinach, making it a good addition to salads, soups, and sandwiches.

Along with minerals, chickweed is also high in carotenoids, B vitamins (B1, B2, and B3), and vitamin C. And one half cup of chickweed leaves contains about 15 grams of protein—about one third of your daily requirement.

In traditional medicine, chickweed is used as a mild diuretic and to relieve bladder irritation. It can also be used topically for burns, cuts, eczema, and rashes.

**2. Chicory**, also known as curly endive or radicchio, is a member of the dandelion family. It's packed with almost every essential trace mineral—particularly calcium, iron, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, and selenium. And like chickweed, chicory is high in carotenoids, B vitamins, and vitamin C.

Chicory is also a prebiotic food, containing inulin, a soluble dietary fiber that acts as a prebiotic—meaning it helps feed the probiotics (good bacteria) in the gastrointestinal microbiome. It's only one of a few food sources containing this important prebiotic, along with bananas, Jerusalem artichokes, garlic, leeks, and onions.

While chicory is native to France, it now grows throughout much of the world.

During coffee shortages, the roasted root (which tastes very similar to a cup o' joe) was brewed and added to coffee grounds to “make them stretch,” particularly in the south during the Civil War embargo. This practice made its way to French colonies around the world—and is still popular in New Orleans today.

Fresh, raw chicory, which has a bitter, peppery flavor, can be added to salads. You can also boil or sauté the herb to remove the bitter taste.

**3. Curly dock**, also known as “yellow dock,” is a hardy, persistent, and widespread “weed.” Its leaves are high in beta-carotene, B and C vitamins, calcium, magnesium and zinc. Its seeds are also rich in calcium and fiber.



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Curly dock is recognized for its astringent properties. For centuries, healers have used the root as a gentle laxative and as a tonic for the liver and gallbladder.

With its mild flavor, curly dock was a popular (and free) food during the Depression. The young leaves can be eaten raw in the spring, and the sturdy stems can be cooked in the summer and fall.

In the fall, mature curly dock seeds can be gathered, roasted, and brewed into a hot drink with an earthy, tea-like flavor.

**4. Dandelion** is one of my favorite salad greens, and I've eaten it since childhood.



It's loaded with vitamins A, B1, B2, B6, B9, and C—along with the hard-to-find, natural form of vitamin K. It's also high in calcium, copper, iron, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium.

All parts of the plant are edible, from roots to stems to leaves to flowers. Leaves and blossoms can be used in salads and on sandwiches. Roots can be roasted for herbal teas, or ground and brewed like coffee.

Late in the season, when the leaves get tough, you can peel them off the stalks and blanch under hot water, or sauté them. The hollow stems stay tender.

Dandelion has been used since ancient times for GI, liver, and kidney health. Recent research has also uncovered its anti-cancer properties.<sup>1</sup>

In combination with South African rooibos (also called aspal or red bush), dandelion has a positive effect on cellular hydration and improves physical stamina and performance in men. (I recommend 400 mg for therapeutic effects.) This vitality-boosting combination can be found in the form of a tea, powder, or

supplement.

**5. Lamb's quarters** is one of the most common native plants—recognizable by its triangular leaves with fuzzy, whitish-gray undersides.



According to herbal lore, the plant may have received its distinctive name because the shape of the leaf is similar to a quarter-cut of lamb meat. Or it may have been used in the pagan harvest celebration in August known as Lammas Quarter.

The lamb's quarters plant is high in vitamins A and C, calcium, phosphorus, and potassium. And it's a good vegetarian source of protein.

Early in the season, you can eat young shoots and leaves right off the plant. Whether you eat them raw or sauté them, they make a good substitute for spinach and are equally nutritious.

The plant grows rapidly over the summer and produces black seeds that are similar to quinoa. As I've reported, there are problems with sustainable harvesting of quinoa, making this common weed a great substitute.

**6. Common mallow** is a pretty ground cover that almost looks like ivy. It's rich in vitamins A and C, as well as calcium and iron.



From a culinary perspective, mallow seeds taste like hazelnuts, and can be used with their leaves and flowers in salads. But mallow is better known for its medicinal properties.

Mallow flowers contain a mucus-like substance (called a demulcent) that soothes the throat and mouth, and is used to help alleviate coughs, asthma, and bronchitis. Tea made from the leaves or flowers forms a thick, gelatinous fluid which can

soothe issues associated with the GI, or genitourinary, tract.

Mallow also has astringent and anti-inflammatory properties. Ancient civilizations used the flowers and leaves in poultices (a natural-made paste) to help heal wounds, boils, rashes, insect bites, and even acne and eczema.

**7. Purslane.** When it comes to this ubiquitous weed, what's old is new again.



Purslane was reportedly a common vegetable in ancient Rome.

Today, trendy restaurants are using the plant's small, fleshy leaves—which are slightly crunchy with a lemony, peppery taste—as a substitute for watercress or spinach in salads. (And of course, they'll charge you \$20 for an “exotic ingredient” you can actually find between sidewalk cracks!)

Purslane leaves and stems are packed full of nutrients. Research shows they have more omega-3s than any other plant and more vitamin A than any other leafy green vegetable.<sup>2</sup>

Purslane also has more vitamin E than spinach and more beta-carotene than carrots.<sup>3</sup> And you'll also get high amounts of vitamins B and C, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, and phosphorus.

In traditional Chinese medicine, purslane is used to help prevent high blood pressure and diabetes. Its leaves are made into poultices to soothe burns and other wounds. Purslane leaves and stems are also used to remedy gastrointestinal diseases, although there's little scientific evidence about this method of treatment.

**8. Red clover.** The bright flowers that top this prolific ground cover have anti-inflammatory properties and are

good sources of B and C vitamins, along with calcium, chromium, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium.



Red clover is rich in isoflavones—which act like estrogens in the body—so it makes sense that the flower is used in Ayurvedic medicine for menopause symptoms (like hot flashes, breast tenderness, anxiety, and depression).

There is some evidence that red clover can also help prevent hair and bone loss and reduce blood pressure and cholesterol levels in post-menopausal women.<sup>4</sup>

The raw flowers are beautiful and tasty additions to salads. They can also be sautéed or pan roasted and added to soups, or used as garnishes on main dishes. And iced red clover tea can be a refreshing beverage on a hot summer day.

**9. Stinging nettle.** The prickly hairs on this plant can not only burrow into your skin, but they also release a painful chemical when touched.



So it's no wonder that nettle is one of the top targets for chemical weed killers. But if you use a little patience (and a thick pair of gloves), I promise that harvesting and eating this plant is worth the hassle.

Ironically, since medieval times, stinging nettle has been used internally and topically to help alleviate arthritis and other pain in muscles and joints. Researchers think it does this by reducing inflammatory chemicals in the body and interfering with the pain-signaling process.

Nettle is also traditionally used for urinary tract infections and difficult urination associated with benign

prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), or an enlarged prostate gland. And some research shows the plant's natural antihistamine properties help reduce hay fever symptoms.<sup>5</sup>

Nettles are rich in vitamins A, B2, C, D, and K, and are a good source of calcium, iodine, iron, manganese, and potassium.

Harvest stinging nettles when they're young—and less prickly. Once they're soaked in water, they lose their sting. They can then be sautéed like collard greens or boiled into a tea.



### 10. Wild amaranth (pigweed).


One of the oldest food crops in the world, this tall weed with its silky blooms was prized by ancient

Native Americans as a rich source of vitamins, minerals, and protein.

Our ancestors used the entire amaranth plant. The seeds are a gluten-free source of protein, nutritionally comparable to wheat germ and oats. And the leaves are rich in vitamins A, B, and C, along with calcium, copper, iron, manganese, potassium, and zinc.

Amaranth leaves have a sweet, nutty taste, making them a savory addition to salads, pesto, pasta sauces, and stir fries. And the seeds can be roasted and then ground into a flour for use in gluten-free breads and cereals.

So as grocery shelves and farmers' markets begin to overflow with the autumn harvest, remember that your own healthy harvest can be as close as your pesticide-free lawn and garden.

After all, one person's “weed” is another one's nutritious feast. 





# The simple—yet stunning—all-natural game-changer for a bigger, brighter brain

A few years ago, a group of researchers at the UCLA Longevity Center showed that dementia could be reversed in nine out of ten people who follow a dozen simple nutritional and lifestyle steps. (I initially reported on this major breakthrough two years ago in the lead story of the February 2016 issue of *Insiders' Cures*, titled, “The all-natural Alzheimer's cure hiding in plain sight.” Revisit this article by entering the title into the top right search bar on my website, [www.DrMicozzi.com](http://www.DrMicozzi.com).)

To sum up the study, both researchers and editors at the medical journal—who rapidly rushed to publish these findings—made a point that was indeed a breakthrough worth paying attention to.

Sadly, the study has since sunken beneath the waves of mainstream medicine—which should be offering these natural treatments to every single patient with Alzheimer's disease.

Instead, the UCLA findings have been ignored in all but a handful of integrative medicine centers around the country.

So suffice it to say, I was pleased to see the same group of UCLA researchers moving forward to study additional natural approaches for not only Alzheimer's, but also memory and mood.

## The simple spice that can boost brainpower

Their new study shows that daily consumption of curcumin (an active ingredient in the spice turmeric) improves memory and mood in people with mild, age-related memory loss—perhaps because of the spice's antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects.<sup>1</sup> Chronic brain inflammation has been linked to both Alzheimer's

and major depression.

The new UCLA study involved 40 adults, between the ages of 40 and 90, who had mild memory loss. In it, participants received either a placebo or 90 mg of curcumin twice daily for 18 months. Their cognitive function was evaluated at the beginning of the study and then at six-month intervals.

The researchers found that the curcumin group's cognitive function improved by 28 percent over 18 months. Group members also had improvements in mood. And brain scans showed improvements in the appearance of the regions that influence emotional state and memory. (It's interesting to note the connection between these two parts of the brain. Perhaps emotions help create memories? I look forward to keeping an eye on these developments...)

The researchers concluded that a relatively small, safe dose of curcumin can provide meaningful cognitive benefits over the years. Note that the 180 mg daily dose in this study is comparable to my recommended dose for joint pain (200 to 250 mg).

If you choose to use powdered turmeric to get your daily dose of curcumin, be sure to sprinkle it liberally on your favorite fish, meats, and vegetables. I've found it to be a great addition to chicken salad, tuna salad, and fresh pork chops or loin.

## Curcumin's unique effects in the body and brain

These studies teach us that—unlike the “one-size-fits-all,” and “one disease-one drug” approach of modern medicine—a natural remedy with one benefit typically has many others.

For instance, I've written before about

how curcumin is a powerhouse for regulating blood sugar. It does this in the same way it helps improve memory and mood—through a mechanism I call “biome-availability.” Here's how it works...

Recent research shows curcumin is not bioavailable—meaning it's not well absorbed from the GI tract into the bloodstream, and thus isn't able to cross over the formidable blood-brain barrier to benefit the brain.

But it turns out curcumin doesn't have to be bioavailable. It just has to be *biome-available*.


In other words, curcumin works directly on the “good bacteria” (probiotics) in the gastrointestinal microbiome. This allows curcumin to decrease inflammation throughout the body and brain. And it also helps keep excess sugar from making its way out of the GI tract and into the bloodstream—where it can contribute to everything from obesity and type 2 diabetes, to dementia—or what I like to refer to as type 3 diabetes (which I discussed at length in the July 2017 issue of *Insiders' Cures*).

(For more about the mechanics behind curcumin's biome-availability, check this article in the August 2018 issue of *Insiders' Cures*: “Brain breakthrough: Brand-new research uncovers the surprising way your gut can protect your brain from Alzheimer's” and “Natural blood sugar remedies are outdoing mainstream diabetes drugs.”)

With all of the health benefits we're finding out about turmeric—and its powerhouse ingredient, curcumin—this simple spice looks like one of nature's most well-rounded compounds for healthy aging.

And when all is said and done, it's really too bad mainstream medicine chooses to ignore simple—yet stunning—science-backed breakthroughs such as these. Luckily,

you don't have to wait for them to catch up to the science, because the original UCLA research led me to expand upon it in my own online learning protocol to prevent and

reverse Alzheimer's disease and dementia. (To learn more about my *Complete Alzheimer's Cure Protocol* [click here](#) or call **1-866-747-9421** and ask for order code: EOV3U900.) 

## This seasonal deficiency endangering your health

### *Plus, the life-saving ways you can fix this shockingly common problem*

Recently, I came across a brand new study concluding that the U.S. government's standard recommendation for vitamin D isn't high enough to protect against colorectal cancer.

To be frank, that's nowhere close to what I'd consider to be new, groundbreaking research...

I've been telling you for *years* that the recommended daily allowance (RDA) for vitamin D is woefully inadequate. And it's not just my opinion. Reams of research show that the 600 IU RDA for adults under age 70 (800 IU for those over 70) may be adequate for bone health, but not much else.

Instead, researchers have found that the optimal dose is over 10 times higher—10,000 IU of vitamin D3 a day. This not only helps protect your bones, but it's also been shown to substantially lower your risk of cancer, heart disease, lung disease, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, depression, and more.

In fact, if you took just one supplement a day, I'd tell you to take vitamin D3. That's how crucial this nutrient is for all aspects of your health. But sadly, the Vitamin D Council reports that a whopping 70 percent of the U.S. population is deficient in this essential vitamin.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Autumn's onset makes D more crucial**

Getting enough D is particularly important as summer ends, days

shorten, and the sun sits lower in the sky. From October to March, the sun's rays don't penetrate the atmosphere enough to allow all people who live in the Northern Hemisphere to make adequate amounts of vitamin D.

And that's not the only reason for D deficiency. In a moment, I'll tell you some surprising factors that can affect how your body makes and absorbs vitamin D.

But first, let's take a closer look at the new study on colorectal cancer I mentioned earlier, plus two other key studies on vitamin D's effect on ovarian cancer, and on lung disease.

#### **What leading cancer researchers reveal about D**

In June, the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* reported findings from scientists at the American Cancer Society, the Harvard School of Public Health, the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and other reputable organizations about the significant association between higher vitamin D levels and lower risk of colorectal cancer.<sup>2</sup>

This international analysis looked at 17 studies involving 5,700 people with colorectal cancer and 7,100 people without it.

Just as I did when I conducted studies at NCI (with some of the same folks who led this new study), the researchers used the same analytical equipment, calibrations, standards of measurement, and units of measure

to evaluate blood samples from each study participant.

So even though they were dealing with a broad range of people from around the world, there was no question the researchers were consistently measuring vitamin D levels across the board.

After five years, the researchers found that the study participants with low vitamin D levels had a 31 percent higher risk of developing colorectal cancer compared to those with "sufficient" levels (the 600 IU RDA, or 30 nmol/L of vitamin D in their blood).

Meanwhile, the people with higher D levels (75 to 100 nmol/L) had a 22 percent lower risk of developing colon cancer. And for every D increase of 25 nmol/L, women's risk of colorectal cancer decreased by 19 percent, and men's fell by 7 percent.

In other words, you need at least three times the RDA of vitamin D to lower your risk of colorectal cancer. And the more D you get, the more your risk plummets.

Meanwhile, another new study from the *Journal of the NCI* found that the active form of vitamin D (calcitriol, which your body makes from vitamin D3) improves survival in women with deadly ovarian cancer.<sup>3</sup>

The research was highly technical, but the upshot is that vitamin D3 helps your normal cells fight cancer cells.

## A daily dose can help you breathe easy

In another new study, scientists at Johns Hopkins University analyzed data collected from about 6,300 men and women, with an average age of 62, over a period of 10 years.

The researchers found that lower levels of D were associated with a higher risk of lung disease.<sup>4</sup>

Specifically, people who had vitamin D levels of less than 20 nmol/L had a greater risk of interstitial lung disease (ILD)—a form of lung inflammation and scarring caused by asbestos, coal dust, autoimmune disorders, infections, and side effects of prescription drugs. This disease is so brutal that most people don't live more than five years past their diagnosis.

The researchers said vitamin D has key hormonal activity that helps regulate the immune system and act against chronic inflammation—like the kind associated with ILD.

They also noted that vitamin D plays an important role in asthma and COPD prevention. And in my view, it's most likely through the same mechanism.

## Four reasons why you're D deficient

As I mentioned earlier, we're entering a time of year when most of us aren't able to make enough vitamin D from the sun alone. But there are other specific factors that can wreak havoc on your vitamin D levels.

**1) You're not taking the right form of D.** Many people don't realize there are different types of vitamin D. For example, vitamin D2 is not as bioavailable as D3—meaning you absorb less of it in your GI tract. And efficient absorption is crucial, since this is how nutrients enter your bloodstream.

But recent findings show that vitamin

D3 immediately gets to work with the probiotics ("good" bacteria) in your GI microbiome—before it even enters your bloodstream. And as I've reported many times before, the healthier your gut bacteria, the better your overall health.

## 2) You're on a low-fat diet.

Vitamin D is only absorbed properly when it's combined with some fat. So following a ridiculously unhealthy "low-fat" diet—which typically consists of low protein and high carbs—means you may not be absorbing enough fat-soluble vitamins like D.

Also, supplements with vitamin D3 *must* contain some healthy fat right in the capsule. That's yet another reason why multivitamins are so useless—they don't contain the proper nutrients (like fats) to help you absorb the vitamin and mineral content.

The fact is, you simply can't get every nutrient you need in one little pill. Instead, decide what supplements are right for you and get the proper formulations from sources you trust.

## 3) You have certain medical conditions.

As I mentioned earlier, it's crucial for your GI tract to properly absorb vitamin D. But liver diseases, kidney diseases, celiac disease, Crohn's disease, and cystic fibrosis can hinder this absorption.

That's why it's a good idea when you go in for your next check-up to ask your doctor for a standard blood test to identify any red flags or markers for these diseases.

Obesity can also interfere with vitamin D absorption. That's because extra fatty tissue sucks up D, preventing it from going where it's needed in the body. But gastric bypass surgery—a common treatment for obesity—can result in a lifetime of poor absorption of vitamin D

(along with many other nutrients).

That's why I recommend cutting both sugar and processed carbs from your diet. It can help your waistline shrink and your vitamin D blood levels improve—without having to undergo costly and potentially dangerous weight-loss surgery.

## 4) You're taking statins or other prescription drugs.

Taking a cholesterol-lowering statin drug can prevent you from achieving optimal vitamin D levels, even with supplementation and sun exposure.

Why? Because vitamin D acts like a hormone in the body, and hormones rely on cholesterol as a basic building block. So artificially lowering your cholesterol prevents the absorption of many important nutrients (like vitamin K2 and Coenzyme Q10).

And, as I've mentioned many times before, lower cholesterol doesn't prevent heart disease—but vitamin D does. So, essentially, statins are a double whammy. They don't reduce your risk of heart disease, but they hinder the absorption of vitamin D, which can indeed lower that risk.

Meanwhile, prescription drugs that contain calcitriol acid can transform vitamin D into its inactive form. These most commonly include anticonvulsants, steroids, antiviral medications, and anti-immune drugs for preventing tissue rejection (typically following an organ transplant).

## The simple steps you can take to deliver the D


The first step in determining whether or not you're getting enough vitamin D is to ask your doctor to check your blood levels twice a year—once toward the end of winter and again toward the end of summer. All you need is a simple blood test called the 25-hydroxy vitamin D, or 25(OH)D test.



Optimal vitamin D blood levels are between 50 and 75 nmol/L—although as we saw with the colorectal cancer study I mentioned on page 5, as much as 100 nmol/L can help protect you against disease.

So if your D levels are low, don't

fret. You can build them up by supplementing with 10,000 IU of vitamin D3 a day. I like to combine the convenient, highly absorbable liquid form of D3 with the potent marine carotenoid astaxanthin for added benefits.

For more information on astaxanthin or the latest vitamin D research (and seven years' worth of archived information), just head to my website, [www.drmicozzi.com](http://www.drmicozzi.com). And if you have any questions in particular, please feel free to send me an email at [drmarcmicozzi@drmicozzi.com](mailto:drmarcmicozzi@drmicozzi.com). 

## The deadly dangers of flu vaccinations

### *How to protect yourself from sickness—safely*

The daily proclamations to get the “new and improved” flu vaccine are already starting. But beware!

Over the last few years, the annual government flu vaccine has been a disaster. And a new study of more than 16 million people over age 65 speaks to this epic failure.

A whopping 80 percent of Medicare recipients in the study who received a flu vaccine last year still ended up getting the flu.<sup>1</sup>

And this research was conducted by the FDA, so you can be sure the scientists were looking to put a positive spin on any angle they could on things to promote the government's relentless flu vaccine campaign.

In fact, the CDC reported that last year's flu vaccines protected only 36 percent of Americans of all ages. Even worse, the CDC found the vaccines to be less effective against the specific flu strains that actually made people sick.<sup>2</sup>

This means your chance of getting any protection from flu vaccines is literally worse than flipping a coin. And you'll only find that you came up on the tail end after you become sick—and are potentially hospitalized—from the flu.

But just because vaccines are virtually useless doesn't mean there aren't safe, effective ways to protect yourself from

the flu during the colder months. I'll share with you my six, simple flu-fighting steps in a moment.

But first, let's look more closely at these new FDA findings, along with another recent study showing just how dangerous flu vaccines can be—for everyone.

#### **Why are flu vaccines so ineffective?**

The FDA study reported that most of the flu vaccines produced in recent years are grown in a chicken egg culture. But a slightly more effective vaccine was grown in an animal cell culture.

Of course, “slightly more effective” is all relative. The FDA commissioner told a Congressional subcommittee in March that the animal cell-culture vaccine, called Flucelvax®, was 20 percent more effective than the egg-culture vaccines.

This means that only 75 percent of older adults who get a Flucelvax® shot will get the flu, compared to the 80 percent diagnosis rate I mentioned earlier. So looking at the big picture, it's really not much of an improvement.

In fact, I'm becoming convinced that the annual flu epidemic is getting worse because of these vaccines.

And a recent study backs me up.

#### **The vaccine *increases* spread of flu viruses**

In a recent *Daily Dispatch* (“Flu vaccines increase airborne flu transmission by more than 600 percent”), I reported on research from the University of Maryland with people who were vaccinated during the 2012-13 flu season. Shocking results showed that they were six times more likely to pass the virus through airborne exposure.<sup>3</sup> (To revisit this article, simply visit [www.DrMicozzi.com](http://www.DrMicozzi.com) and type the title into the top right search bar.)

The researchers reported that when the study participants got the flu, a process called “aerosol shedding” sent little bits of the active, infectious virus into the air when they breathed. Amazingly, these people didn't even have to sneeze or cough to blast the virus particles into the air. Just regular breathing released them.

Which means you can indeed contract the flu by simply being next to someone who has the virus. (So maybe it's not so crazy to wear face masks when out in public like they do in Asia.)

And shockingly, it appears that current and/or prior vaccinations actually increase your contagious transmission rate if you catch the flu.

The researchers also suggested that vaccinations may promote lung

inflammation, closure of airways in the lungs, and an increase in the amount of airborne flu particles—all factors which lead to increased aerosol shedding.

It's really a vicious circle, and the flu vaccine only appears to be making matters worse.

### Help is *not* on the way

A couple of the candidates who ran for president in 2016 publicly expressed concerns and skepticism over the rampant academic-government-pharma vaccine industry. And one of them became president.

It's time government reform extended to the sacred cows (and chickens) in our public health bureaucracy.

But that's not likely to happen—at least not for the upcoming flu season. Beginning this month, the CDC will start beating the drum again for you to rush out and get their latest vaccine.

And you'll see calls to get vaccinated everywhere: at your doctor's office, the local drugstore, and possibly even your workplace. It's pretty much unavoidable.

But what you *really* should avoid is this vaccine. And be sure to take precautions around those who've been vaccinated because chances are, they'll come down with the flu anyway. (And leading up to that, I'm sure many who've gotten the vaccine believe they're no longer contagious... or even worse, will deny they're coming down with something altogether).

I fear that this flu season it will be, as the French say, "*suave qui peut*" or "every man for himself." Here are six simple, natural ways you can protect yourself from the flu this winter.

### 6 vaccine-free strategies for flu protection

**1) Wash your hands.** Flu and cold viruses are typically spread through

direct contact—like touching your nose, mouth, or eyes after coming in contact with a contaminated surface. That's why washing your hands with good old-fashioned soap and water is the best flu prevention technique.

In fact, an experiment my daughter and I conducted years ago found that washing with soap removes 99 percent of germs from your hands.

So wash your hands regularly throughout the day, and avoid touching your face unless your hands are clean. And don't forget to wash under your fingernails, where germs love to congregate.

**2) Avoid air dryers.** In the February 2015 issue of *Insiders' Cures* ("The shocking source spreading cold and flu viruses"), I wrote about a study showing that hand dryers also blast viruses around a restroom. And those viruses can linger in the air for up to 30 minutes. It's pretty gross when you think about it...

But simply drying your hands with a paper towel or handkerchief can scrape off any remaining germs left over after hand washing. Just make sure to use that towel or handkerchief to open the door before you exit. It'll help you avoid germs deposited on the door handle by those who opted to use the air dryer—or even worse—those who didn't wash their hands at all.

**3) Rinse off your face.** Remember, someone can literally breathe the flu virus onto you. But you can protect yourself by rinsing away any virus microbes that get near your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Whenever you believe you've come in contact with someone with the flu, flush out the germs by holding your breath and submerging your entire face into a sink or large bowl of warm water—completely covering your eyes, nose, and mouth. Blink your eyes several times. Then blow out through your nose.

**4) Boost your immunity.** The best way to fight any virus is to have a strong immune system. I recommend you take a high-quality vitamin B complex every day, along with 250 mg of vitamin C twice a day.

Research shows that regular intake of vitamin D can help prevent or fight off the flu, as well as colds and viral infections. I recommend 10,000 of D3 a day. (For more on D's disease-fighting capabilities, see page 5).

Magnesium (400 mg a day) and selenium (100 mcg per day) have also been found to help your immune system ward off colds and viruses like the flu.

**5) Add an adaptogen to your daily routine.** These medicinal plant substances help your body maintain a healthy balance and state of normalcy, and can help promote an active and healthy immune system. Like their name implies, they help you "adapt" to the stressors of every day life.

Common adaptogens include ashwagandha (500 mg per day), panax ginseng (250 to 500 mg per day), and Sutherlandia frutescens (600 mg per day).

**6) Take these herbs at the first sniffle.** Echinacea, goldenseal, and elderberry have been found to be effective at reducing the length and severity of colds and flu, but they must be taken at the *first* sign of a virus.

Rather than swallowing capsules, I prefer to brew these herbs as a tea—with the addition of flu-fighting honey, fresh lemon, and/or ginger.

The bottom line: It's very easy to (sometimes unknowingly) expose yourself to cold and flu viruses. But practicing sensible personal hygiene and boosting your immune system can go a long way toward keeping you flu-free this fall and winter. **IC**

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