



YOUR health

IMMUNITY BOOSTERS

During monsoon, the chances of your immune system going for a toss are high. That makes you susceptible to more than one ailment. "The body's biochemistry changes with the weather. In this season, people sweat a lot, losing salt and water, which reduces their immunity. Besides, viruses tend to get more active in this weather," says Dr Virender Anand, an internal medicine consultant with Moolchand Medcity, New Delhi.

"The most common illnesses during this season are cold and cough, an increase in allergy-related conditions such as asthma, diarrhoea, viral or bacterial infections, seasonal fever like malaria, dengue, typhoid, joint pain and boils on the skin," says Dr Monica Mahajan, a senior internal medicine consultant with Max Healthcare, New Delhi.

But you can boost your body's defence mechanism to fight germs and microbes. Here's how:

1. Have plenty of fluids, advises Dr Anand. "Drink water, enjoy soups. Make up for the loss of salt and water due to sweating," he says. But avoid fruit juices from roadside stalls.
2. Make sure you get enough vitamin C, which boosts your immunity and is often prescribed for common cold. "To keep that cold away, take citrus fruits such as orange and lemon that are rich in vitamin C," says Dr Mahajan.
3. Avoid eating outside. If you don't have a choice, avoid uncooked items such as *chaat, gol gappas*, salads and sliced fruits since microbes thrive in them. It's good to have healthy salads and fruits at

- home though.
4. Don't skip meals. "Eating on time maintains your immunity," says Dr Mahajan.
5. Those with allergies and asthma must particularly avoid extremes of temperature, such as stepping out from an air-conditioned car into the hot sun. And they must take their cold or cough more seriously than others. "They must consult a doctor and take antibiotics as soon as symptoms of cold appear," says Dr Mahajan.
6. Those with joint pains or osteoarthritis must also avoid ex-



tremies of temperature. Also, exercise regularly to avoid stiffness in joints.

7. If you haven't been immunised against Hepatitis A or typhoid, now is the time for vaccination for both adults and children.
8. A healthy lifestyle always helps. "Avoid smoking, drinking, and working for long hours. Take adequate rest. All these go into protecting your system," says Dr Anand. ♦

—Irena Akbar