

TOP TIPS

1. Take vitamin D

This is vital for good health and the prevention of disease. Take it with vitamin K2 for optimal health.

2. Use anti-viral supplements

Oregano oil and olive leaf are some of nature's most powerful anti-viral agents. Use at first sign of a cold or virus and take occasionally as a preventative measure.

3. Look after your gut

A healthy gut is essential for a healthy immune system. Probiotics restore beneficial bacteria that may have been lost due to overuse of antibiotics or poor diet.

4. Try pelargonium sidoides

This is a herbal medicinal product that has anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties. It's particularly good for upper-respiratory tract infections such as a blocked nose or sore throat.

So was this luck? I definitely felt lucky but I also had a few tricks up my sleeve. While many of the team used hand sanitisers religiously, I never used them once. Instead I washed my hands every time I came back to my dressing room using good old fashioned soap and water. The reason for this is that it's been suggested that sanitisers can contribute to the creation of drug-resistant bacteria and they also have an impact on your own good bacteria.

I'm also an enthusiastic supplement taker. I take lots of antioxidants including vitamin D3 (along with K2). Vitamin D plays a critical role in our ability to fight off infections but many people in northern climates are deficient in it.

I keep anti-viral supplements to hand too. At the first sign of any virus or a tickle in the throat, I take oregano oil which is one of the most powerful anti-virals I know of. Olive leaf extract is also good and when I think I'm getting ill, I take them both together. Usually within 24 hours all signs of infection are completely gone or if I do succumb it's short and mild.

Of course to have a healthy immune system, a healthy lifestyle is paramount. It's important to cut back on sugars to keep the gut healthy. Getting adequate sleep and rest is important too.

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Glynis Barber *Ward off winter bugs*

Have a healthy January with these holistic tips from our new columnist

Is it just me or do winter viruses seem to be getting worse each year? More and more people appear to be falling ill and the bugs seem nastier as well, taking people out of action for a week or so. But why do some people succumb so often while others get through winter with only a slight snuffle? It's all down to how well our immune systems work and lifestyle, diet and stress all play an important part.

In 2015 I spent the whole year appearing in a production in the West End. I was the only cast member who never took a sick day despite the fact I was decades older than the rest of the actors who were all in their twenties and early thirties. At one point a very nasty strain of the norovirus swept through the theatre and 19 actors out of a total of 26 succumbed, as well as most of the stage crew and front of house staff. This went on for weeks and those of us who hadn't caught it yet were terrified – we felt like dead men walking. One by one they fell and I couldn't quite believe it when it was finally over and I was still standing.

