

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

FAX: 932-5261

December 31, 2009

BY: Mary A. Keith, Ph.D., L.D.  
Food, Nutrition and Health Agent**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

5339 S. County Road 579

Seffner, FL 33584-3334

PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776  
e-mail:mkeith@ufl.edu**Five to Fight Off the Flu**

Starting the New Year with a head cold, or worse the flu, is not the best beginning. Unfortunately, if you all ready have a cold or flu as you read this, your chances of getting over it in time to party tonight are pretty slim. There are no magic bullets to make it all go away instantly. But you can add a few ideas to the New Year's Resolutions jar for things to do to increase your resistance in the future. And there are some things you might resolve to avoid wasting your money on because they just don't work in most people.

Five Positives: 1. Eat a balanced diet. The wider the range of foods you eat the wider variety of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and other protective ingredients you'll be getting. All nutrients have roles to play in keeping your body balanced and ready to fight off infections. There's little to no evidence that any one compound has the magic key to infection protection. It's not necessary to go through each day's menu with a fine-toothed comb, just evaluate your weekly average and make gradual changes.

Positive 2. Exercise. Regular exercise improves immune system function. Recent exercise has more effect than past exercise, so if you can't manage it daily try to get the body moving at least every other day. Moderate moving is fine, enough to increase the heart rate a little. You don't want to go for intensity or until you're exhausted. That actually lowers immunity for a short time.

Positive 3. Get enough sleep. People who rarely get at least 7 hours of sleep

are more likely to get sick with both short term and chronic illnesses. Shut eye helps!

Positive 4. Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids. It doesn't have to be plain water, it doesn't have to be 8 full glasses a day. Coffee, tea, soda (preferably diet), fruits and juices, soups and salads all add fluid to your body. Adequate liquid levels help your immune system function properly.

Positive 5. Wash your hands, often! Rub wet, soapy hands together at least 15 seconds. Make sure the backs of your hands, between the fingers and up to the wrist all get their scrubbing. Rinse with warm water and dry with paper or a clean cloth towel.

Some things to avoid to protect your immune system include stress and cigarettes. Even second-hand smoke increases your chances of getting sick. Stay away from smoke and smokers as much as you can. If you smoke, stop. Not easy to do but oh, so helpful for your health!

But, what about all the different pills, tablets, bottles and supplements on the market? Which of them works best? The short answer is that none of them has much good, strong scientific evidence for their benefit. Some might help a few people sometimes, but none make a significant difference for everyone. A few have been removed from the market because of dangerous side effects (such as Zicam intra-nasal spray because users were losing their sense of smell!). Even traditionalists like vitamin C and echinacea haven't been found have a significant effect on the majority of people in large studies. Most of the ones on the market use evidence based on animal studies, test tube studies or very small, poorly designed human studies, not real life.

If you like a cup of green tea, go ahead. It will probably reduce your stress level, but there's little evidence it will protect you from a cold or flu. Here's an easy and

colorful recipe to serve a dozen people at your party this evening or brunch tomorrow morning. You can cut it into 12 servings, or dice it finely into appetizer-sized bites and serve with toothpicks. However you choose, have a Happy and Healthy New Year!

### Corsican Frittata

24 oz fresh spinach	10 oz boneless chicken breasts
1 1/2 Tbsp olive oil	2 tsp minced garlic
1/2 cup sliced green onions	1 med red bell pepper finely diced
1 medium green bell pepper, finely diced	1/2 cup milk
1 dozen eggs (or 2 1/2 cups egg substitute)	1/2 cup chicken broth
1 cup bacon bits	8 oz crumbled feta cheese

Heat oven to 375° F. Spray a 9x13 inch pan with pan spray. Rinse spinach, follow package directions to wilt it microwave. Drain and chop. Cook chicken in non-stick skillet until centers reach 165° F. Dice. Add oil to non-stick pan, sauté garlic, onions and peppers until tender. Transfer to baking pan. Blend egg, milk and broth, pour over vegetables. Sprinkle chicken, bacon, cheese and spinach over all. Bake 50-60 min or until center reaches 160° F. Cut into cubes or serving portions. Garnish with sliced green onions and slivers of red and green bell pepper. Serve immediately.

*Hillsborough County Extension is a cooperative service of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners and the University of Florida.*

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION IN AGRICULTURE, HOME ECONOMICS, STATE OF FLORIDA, IFAS, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING