

## Protect Yourself From Germs on a Plane

Catching a flight to visit family and friends this holiday season? You need to be prepared for one sure thing that could spoil your vacation: Germs.

No one wants to spend the holidays nursing a stuffy nose or enduring a bout with the stomach flu. But with millions of people passing through airports during the holidays, you're bound to cross paths with the kind of germs that can end your stay, cold turkey.

In a recent study by published in the Journal of Environmental Health, researchers found that germs may be 100 times more likely to infect a traveler in the air than on the ground. Close quarters on the plane, low humidity, and poor air circulation create an environment ripe for the spread of germs. Hundreds of passengers also leave their germs on the seats, door knobs, seat belts, and on-board bathroom facilities during each flight.

So what can you do to prevent germs on a plane from creating a holiday memory you would rather forget?

**1. Stay hydrated.** Drinking water will keep you well-hydrated during your flight and help your body ward off any germs trying to join you at grandma's house.



**2. Use a nasal mist.** In the study of air travelers, researchers found that nasal mists also helped lower the chances of catching a cold by compensating for the low cabin humidity that makes you more susceptible to infection.

**3. Wear a face mask.** It may not be on your must-pack list, but researchers believe a mask is a good way to protect yourself from germs on a plane. You may also consider wearing a

mask if you're one of those travelers boarding the plane with a cold.

**4. Wash your hands.** The National Institutes of Health says washing your hands with soap and warm water may be the best approach to fighting off flu-causing germs. Wash your hands before you board the plane and soon after your arrival. Use hand sanitizer if access to a sink and water isn't readily available.

*Hocking B, et al. Common cold transmission in commercial aircraft: Industry and passenger implication. Journal of Environmental Health Research (2004); 3.1:p200.*

*National Institutes of Health  
Centers for Disease Control*

Wash Your  
Hands the Right  
Way  
[www.cdc.gov/  
features/  
handwashing/](http://www.cdc.gov/features/handwashing/)

## Go Ahead and Gobble, But Not Too Much

It all looks so good on Thanksgiving Day. Turkey and gravy, dressing, sweet potatoes, and enough desserts to open your own bakery.

Go ahead and gobble, but not too much. The average person eats about 3,000 calories at the dinner table on Turkey Day. A 160-pound person would have to walk 30 miles to burn off that many calories.

You can still enjoy the feast. Just don't act like you're trying out for a competitive eating contest. Get your personal daily calorie limit at [www.choosemyplate.gov/downloads/MyPyramid\\_Calorie\\_Levels.pdf](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/downloads/MyPyramid_Calorie_Levels.pdf).

Then keep that number in mind when deciding what to eat.



The [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) concept also shows you the right portions of each food to put on your plate.

To keep your calories under control on Thanksgiving Day, try this basic action plan:

**Before** – Eat light, healthy meals and snacks during the day prior to the

big meal. Choose a green salad, soup, or fruits and vegetables. Then when the dinner bell rings, you won't be as hungry.

**During** – If you really feel the need to indulge, sample everything on the table, just in smaller portions. Track your daily calories with a food journal or smartphone application, and make adjustments if you're overeating.

**After** – Plan to take a walk and exercise to burn off a few of those extra calories after the big meal. With a little planning and self-control, you can still enjoy the Thanksgiving meal and be healthy.

*American Council on Exercise  
U.S. Department of Agriculture*



## Happy Thanksgiving – Vegetarian-style!

You don't have to roast a turkey to celebrate Thanksgiving. More than 7 million Americans follow a no-meat (or poultry or fish) diet – even on Thanksgiving Day.

A vegetarian diet can give you all the nutrients you need. Just be sure to choose your foods carefully.

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein-rich foods like beans, lentils, soy, nuts, and seeds are great sources of nutrients. Also, a vegetarian diet has been proven to prevent and treat chronic conditions. These include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure. With a little creative cookery, your guests will be thrilled to celebrate Thanksgiving, vegetarian-style.

“You may ask, ‘How can it still taste good?’” says Kathryn McLane, author of the recipe book, *Tastefully Vegan*.

“With just a little extra work, and some recipes you like, you'll see that it's possible for healthy food to taste delicious.”

If you're not sure how to cook up a Thanksgiving meal sans the turkey, you might need a little spice and inspiration in the kitchen. Last year *The New York Times* asked expert chefs and cookbook authors to send in their favorite vegetarian dishes fit for the big meal. In response, they received these 60-plus mouth-watering recipes for desserts, side dishes, and main course entrees: [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/08/health/20101108\\_thanksgiving.html?ref=health](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/08/health/20101108_thanksgiving.html?ref=health)

(Note: Even veggie dishes can be unhealthy and fattening if they're made with lots of sugar or heavy cream.)

If you're ready to try something new this year, take a break from basting the turkey. Instead, serve a vegetarian feast that your guests will enjoy and remember.

*Vegetarian Times* (2008, April). *Vegetarian Times study shows 7.3 million Americans are vegetarians.*

McLane, Kathryn, and Gerard McLane. *Tastefully Vegan: Creative Vegetarian Cooking*. Brushton, N.Y.: TEACH Services Inc., 2001.

*American Dietetic Association*

### Stressed? Take It One Sigh at a Time

If you've ever felt the pressure of a deadline at the office or have been frustrated by a family member, you want relief. Take it one sigh at a time, and you'll be fine.

In a recent study, researchers found that when your body experiences stress, your muscle tension slowly increases, forcing you to sigh. You naturally take a deep breath and let it out.

Researchers also found that choosing to sigh or using breathing techniques showed similar stress-reducing results. However, the body's natural sigh produced the most relief.

Take a deep breath. Sighing relieves tension as a natural way of coping with everyday challenges.



*Vlemincx, E, et al. Take a deep breath: The relief effect of spontaneous and instructed sighs. Physiol Behav. 2010; 101(1):67-73.*



### If You Have Pink Eye...

You might wake up in the morning with puffy

eyes or notice the whites of your eyes look pink and wonder what the symptoms mean.

This could be the first sign of conjunctivitis, more commonly known as pink eye.

Pink eye is an inflammation of the outer layer of the eye and the inside of the eyelid. Your eyes turn red, feel scratchy and irritated, and might even have a weepy discharge. Pink eye is generally caused by viruses, bacteria, or allergies.

Conjunctivitis is typically spread from person to person through hand contact with someone who is infected. If someone at work, school, or home has pink eye, be certain to use separate towels. Disinfect toys, door knobs, and other shared objects. Make sure anyone who might be exposed washes their hands frequently to keep germs from spreading. Viral and bacterial pink eye are

very contagious for about two weeks from the first symptom.

Treatment for pink eye depends on its cause. If it's bacterial, your doctor may prescribe antibiotic drops or ointment. If it's viral, the infection will likely clear up on its own. If allergies are the cause, eye drops to treat the symptoms might help.

*National Institutes of Health*

### ASK THE DOCTOR *Wellness*

**Q:** How can I reduce my high triglycerides?

**A:** Go to [www.wellspring.com/wn/ask-triglycerides.pdf](http://www.wellspring.com/wn/ask-triglycerides.pdf) to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: [evan@wellspring.com](mailto:evan@wellspring.com), subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

**Health Challenge:** “Sleep On It For Better Health” available at: [www.wellspring.com/wn/hc-sleep.pdf](http://www.wellspring.com/wn/hc-sleep.pdf) Get 7-8 hours of sleep daily.