

### Steps to Avoid Catching A Cold

**Nearly 22 million school days are lost due to the common cold alone. Children have about six to 10 colds a year and adults about two to four, but in families with children in school, the number of colds per child can be as high as 12 a year according to the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases.**

**Here are some simple steps to help avoid catching a cold:**

**\*Wash your hands. San Diego Naval Health Center researchers saw a 45 percent decrease in respiratory illnesses in recruits who were instructed to wash their hands at least five times a day.**

**\*Keep your hands away from your nose and eyes. Your eyes and nose do not have the same protective mechanisms that your mouth does and are where most colds are caught.**

**\*Get seven-and-a-half to eight hours of sleep each night. The people who only slept four hours a night produced half the number of antibodies than when getting the proper amount.**

**\*Drink plenty of water. The air is drier inside making our nasal passages drier and harder for our bodies to shed those bacteria and viruses. Using a humidifier is helpful but staying hydrated from the inside is just as important.**

**\*Go outside—fresh air is healthy air. I am sure you have been told to “bundle up so you don’t catch a cold.” That really isn’t why we catch more colds during the winter. We are just inside more and in close contact with each other.**

**\*Carry and use your own pen. Don’t use the pen offered at places like the doctor’s office, the bank or restaurants as they have been touched by many others. Viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes up to two hours or more on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs and desks and you have a better chance to catch more “germs.”**

**\*Carry hand sanitizer with you. A recent study showed that families who carried hand sanitizers with them had 59 percent fewer cases of stomach bugs than nonusers.**

**\*Reduce the stress in your life—go out with friends, talk with your spouse, get a message.**

**\*Move more. Immune cell function improved 45 percent in adults who were**

**physically active for at least three hours a week.**

**\*Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and grains. They are packed with antioxidants to help your body fight off colds and flu. If an apple a day doesn't do it, eat yogurt, fish or chicken soup to help you feel better faster.**