Colds: How Not to Catch Them All

Question
Which are you most likely to catch this academic year?

A. A Frisbee
B. A glimpse of naked Orlando Bloom
C. A cold
D. A fish

Answer
It depends on whether or not you play Frisbee, read the tabloids, or go fishing. This much we can say:

- Your chance of catching a common cold is high.
- Most adults get 2–4 colds a year.
- College and university students may be at higher risk, studies suggest.
- Colds disrupt students’ health, well-being, and academic performance.

How to prevent a cold

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can help</th>
<th>May help a little</th>
<th>Won’t help</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequent hand washing with soap</td>
<td>Hand sanitizers (60% alcohol)</td>
<td>“Antibacterial” soap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not touching eyes, nose, and mouth</td>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding air travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staying away from others when sick</td>
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<td>Vitamin C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staying away from people with colds</td>
<td></td>
<td>Echinacea</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

You may not know as much as you think you do about avoiding common infections (stomach bugs, the flu, mono, and more). Take the quiz in Student Health 101, November 2016.

Sources: Science-Based Medicine; Clinical Infectious Diseases, 2005, 40(9).