



Can you catch a cold from being cold?

This question has been asked many times since the dawn of time. Here's the answer. A common cold is a virus and not caused by cold weather.

There is no scientific data that supports it other than colds and the flu most often occur during colder months of the year.

Pneumonia isn't just plain old pneumonia.

Regarding the flu, one way to protect yourself from seasonal misery is to take a flu shot every year. And, truck drivers, you are in some germier places so be sure to wash your hands frequently.

I strongly recommend the flu shot. Every year, we get plenty of questions about the effectiveness of flu shots and that other shot that is often offered at the same time. Here's a typical example.

Q *My wife and I are team drivers. When we got flu shots in the fall, the doctor asked if we had gotten a pneumonia shot in the past two or so years. Neither of us have done that. We are in our 50s. Should we have pneumonia shots? How old should you be before you recommend one and how long does it last?*

A As you get older, it's tougher to fight pneumonia. So if you are older than 50, get vaccinated and make sure it is the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, called the PCV13 or Prevnar 13 vaccine. This vaccination is one you should have twice during your adult years, usually seven-10 years apart.



I say make sure it's the PCV13 because pneumonia isn't plain old pneumonia any more. PCV13 covers a new strain of pneumococcal bacteria that has become the badass of pneumonias.

The Centers for Disease Control say more than 4,000 people die each year due to pneumococcal infections. These infections can be hard to treat as some strains are resistant to antibiotics. This makes it even more important to protect yourself. Get vaccinated.

Speaking of colder months, who hasn't stomped your feet or blown warm air onto your cold hands to battle the numbness from being outside in the cold. But, numbness in the hands and feet isn't always a short-term result from being cold a little too long. It can be a sign of something more serious.

Q *I have been a truck driver for 10 years. I am 45. For the past year I have experienced numbness and tingling, and some aching in my hands after hours on the wheel. Now it's almost constant. Over-the-counter pain relievers do not help. What is causing this and what do I do about it?*

A Numbness and tingling in the hands after long hours of gripping the steering wheel is not uncommon. But it can be very difficult to diagnose, and many medical issues need to be ruled out. Examples of these medical issues are obesity, diabetes, hypothyroidism, and various neuropathies that can occur from musculoskeletal issues.

The most common musculoskeletal



issues is carpal tunnel syndrome, which is due to repetitive motion in most cases, but can be due to the above listed medical conditions. So the best course of action is to see a good internist or primary care doctor to separate out the issues.

One remedy you can do now is to use wrist splints at bedtime for a month. Sleeping postures (bending your wrist back) can often compress the median nerve and cause the symptoms with or without medical issues. **LL**

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