

## HEALTHY LIVING

Going 'Blue'  
a logical next  
step for NCH

allenWEISS

allen.weiss@nchmd.org

NCH Healthcare System is the first Certified Blue Zones Worksite in Florida and the first health-care system in the nation to earn certification from the nationwide community well-being initiative.

Well-being is our mission and our promise — for those we serve and also for our employees. That's why we're making substantive changes on our campuses: improving the foods we serve in our cafeterias, eliminating sugar-based beverages and working with local producers to bring farmers markets to our campuses. Each of these actions reinforces the idea that "healthy" doesn't have to be "hard." We are creating success for patients, employees and the community at large.

From 2015-2016, NCH has seen a 40 percent drop in the number of work-days lost due to injuries. During the same time, 25 percent of NCH well-being program participants saw a positive change in their nutrition score and 34 percent saw their body mass index (a weight measurement) shift positively. Part of that success is due to work being done in NCH cafeterias, which are quickly becoming some of the healthiest places to eat in Southwest Florida. Healthy foods are marked with blue stickers, and unhealthy impulse buys have been removed from check-out stands. In 2016, we removed all sugar-sweetened beverages from our cafeterias and vending machines, a forward-thinking improvement not seen in many other health systems. This change is resulting in an estimated 500 pounds of sugar not consumed each month.

Taking on the Blue Zones Project challenge was a natural next step for NCH, whose system-wide well-being efforts date back to 2009. Since then we have seen a decrease of 54 percent in health-care expenditures for employees (and a \$27 million savings in the

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Summertime sniffles:  
Why do they happen?

## NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Most everyone looks forward to summer — time to get away and have some fun. So what could be more unfair than catching a cold when it's warm? How can cold symptoms arise when it's not cold and flu season? Is there any way to dodge the summertime sniffles?

Cold symptoms can be caused by more than 200 different viruses. Each can bring the sneezing, scratchy throat and runny nose that can be the first signs of a cold. The colds we catch in winter are usually triggered by the most common viral infections in humans, a group of germs called rhinoviruses. Rhinoviruses and a few other cold-causing viruses seem to survive best in cooler weather. Their numbers surge in September and begin to dwindle in May.

During summer months, the viral landscape begins to shift. "Generally speaking, summer and winter colds are caused by different viruses," says Dr. Michael Pichichero, a pediatrician and infectious disease researcher at the Rochester General Hospital Research Institute in New York. "When you talk about summer colds, you're probably talking about a non-polio enterovirus infection."

Enteroviruses can infect the tissues in your nose and throat, eyes, digestive system and elsewhere. A few enteroviruses can cause polio, but vaccines have mostly eliminated these viruses from Western countries.

Far more widespread are more than 60 types of non-polio enteroviruses. They're the second most common type of virus — after rhinovirus — that infects humans. About half of people with enterovirus infections don't get sick at all. But nationwide, enteroviruses cause an estimated 10 million to 15 million illnesses each year, usually between June and October.

Enteroviruses can cause a fever that comes on suddenly. Body temperatures may range from 101 to 104 degrees Fahrenheit. Enteroviruses can also cause mild respiratory symptoms, sore throat, headache, muscle aches and gastrointestinal issues like nausea or vomiting.



"All age groups can be affected, but like most viral infections, enterovirus infections predominate in childhood," Dr. Pichichero says.

Adults can be protected from enterovirus infections if they've developed antibodies from previous exposures, but they can still get sick if they encounter a new type of enterovirus.

Less common enteroviruses can cause other symptoms. Some can lead to conjunctivitis, or pinkeye — a swelling of the outer layer of the eye and eyelid. Others can cause an illness with rash. In rare cases, enteroviruses can affect the heart or brain.

To prevent enterovirus infections, says Dr. Pichichero, "it's all about blocking viral transmission."

The viruses travel in respiratory secretions, like saliva or mucus, or in the stool of an infected person. You can become infected by direct contact, or you might pick up the virus by touching contaminated surfaces or objects, such as a telephone, doorknob or baby's diaper.

"Frequent hand washing and avoiding exposure to people who are sick with fever can help prevent the spread of infection," Dr. Pichichero says.

The summer colds caused by enteroviruses generally clear up without treatment within a few days or even a week. But see a health-care provider if you have concerning symptoms such as high fever or a rash. ■

## in the know

**There's no cure for a cold, but you can relieve symptoms by:**

- >> Resting in bed.
- >> Drinking plenty of fluids.
- >> Taking acetaminophen (Tylenol, for example) for headache or fever.
- >> Gargling with warm salt water or using ice chips, throat sprays or lozenges for a sore throat.
- >> Using a decongestant or saline nasal spray for nasal symptoms.

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