



HEALTH & WELLNESS

USOPC.ORG
ISSUE
#1

UNDERSTANDING ILLNESS

Illness Timing

Athletes can develop illnesses at any time of the year, but evidence shows they are more prevalent during the fall and early winter. Often this timeframe overlaps with the end of a very hard training year or the building-up phase for winter sports and athletes may be feeling more rundown.

International travel and changes in time zones, climates, altitude, sleep patterns and stress combined with inadequate nutrition or hydration may all contribute to a diminished immune system, which increases the chance of getting sick.

Immune System

What is it? The immune system is the body's natural defense system. It works to protect against bacteria, viruses and parasites which cause illness.

What contributes to a healthy immune system?

- GOOD NUTRITION
- RECOVERY
- IMMUNIZATIONS
- GOOD RELATIONSHIPS
- SPORT/LIFE BALANCE
- REGULAR MEDICAL AND DENTAL CHECK-UPS
- ADEQUATE HYDRATION
- TRAINING LOAD & TYPE
- SLEEP QUALITY AND AMOUNT
- STRESS MANAGEMENT
- HOBBIES (NON-SPORT ACTIVITIES)



Respiratory Illnesses

- Caused by COVID, Flu, Cold, RSV and others.
- Can be viral or bacterial.
- Typically caught by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes, or through airborne transfer from a nearby cough or sneeze.
- You may be contagious from one day before symptoms develop and up to ten days after becoming sick.

Colds

- Adults have an average of two to three colds per year.
- On average, a cold lasts 7 to 10 days.
- A cold is caused by one of more of 200 possible viruses, so symptoms can vary.

SYMPTOMS:

- A scratchy or sore throat, lasting one to two days.
- Sneezing.
- A stuffy nose & congestion.
- Watery eyes.
- Mucus draining from your nose into your throat.
- A productive cough.

COVID

- Symptoms can vary and may present as those of cold and flu. May also include loss of taste or smell and shortness of breath.
- Symptoms commonly last 1-2 weeks
- Treatment includes rest, hydration, and anti-viral medications.
- You may remain contagious for 10 days after the start of your symptoms.

Flu (Influenza)

- The yearly flu shot can reduce the incidence and severity of the flu.

SYMPTOMS:

- Fever (higher than 102°F) and chills.
- Productive cough.
- Sore throat.
- Runny or stuffy nose and

congestion.

- Muscle or body aches.
- Persistent headaches.
- Fatigue.
- Occasional nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

RSV

- Can have mild cold-like symptoms or progress to pneumonia.
- Additional symptoms may include wheezing.

When to seek Medical Care

As soon as any symptoms start. Urgent medical attention must be sought with any of the following:

- Fever over 101°F.
- Productive cough with yellow, green or blood-streaked sputum.
- Chest pain.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Pain in your ears.
- Sinus pressure.
- Persistent sore throat.

