“Healthy eating is a way of life, so it’s important to establish routines that are simple, realistically, and ultimately livable.”

- Horace

Winter Solstice
For the Northern Hemisphere
December 21, 2022, at 4:48 PM EST

The Winter Solstice signifies the official astronomical start of winter for the Northern Hemisphere. It is also the shortest day of the year in which we receive the least amount of daylight. The period of time between sunrise and sunset are considered daylight hours. According to farmersalmanac.com, solstice comes from the words “sol” and “sistere”. Two Latin words that mean “sun” and “to stand still” respectively.

The winter solstice is the precise moment when the Northern Hemisphere is tilted as far away from the sun as possible. Stand outside at noon on the day of the winter solstice and note that your shadow is the longest shadow that you cast for the year to observe the effects of the solstice.

The days start growing longer after the winter solstice is reached and will continue to grow longer until June, which is when the summer solstice begins for the Northern Hemisphere.

Resources: https://www.almanac.com/content/first-day-winter-winter-solstice
A Strong Defense Against Flu: Get Vaccinated!

The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against influenza (flu) is to get a flu vaccine every flu season. Flu is a contagious respiratory disease that can lead to serious illness, hospitalization, or even death. CDC recommends everyone six months and older get an annual flu vaccine.

What are some key reasons to get a flu vaccine?

- Every year, flu vaccination prevents illnesses, medical visits, hospitalizations, and deaths.

- Flu vaccination also is an important preventive tool for people with chronic health conditions. For example flu vaccination has been associated with lower rates of some cardiac events among in people with heart disease.

- Vaccinating pregnant women helps protect them from flu illness and hospitalization, and also has been shown to help protect the baby from flu infection for several months after birth, before the baby can be vaccinated.

- A 2017 study showed that flu vaccine can be life-saving in children.

- While some people who get vaccinated still get sick, flu vaccination has been shown in several studies to reduce severity of illness.

Why is it important to get a flu vaccine EVERY year?

- Flu viruses are constantly changing, so flu vaccines may be updated from one season to the next to protect against the viruses that research suggests will be common during the upcoming flu season.

- Your protection from a flu vaccine declines over time. Yearly vaccination is needed for the best protection.
What kinds of flu vaccines are recommended?

There are several licensed and recommended flu vaccine options this season:

- **Standard dose flu shots made from virus grown in eggs.**
- **Shots made with adjuvant and high dose** for older adults.
- **Shots made with virus grown in cell culture instead of eggs.**
- **Shots made using a recombinant vaccine production technology** that does not require the use of a flu virus.
- **Live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV, the nasal spray vaccine),** which is made with live, weakened influenza viruses. It is an option for people 2 through 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

Is the flu vaccine safe?

Flu vaccines have a good safety record. Hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccines over the past 50 years. Extensive research supports the safety of seasonal flu vaccines. Each year, CDC works with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other partners to ensure the highest safety standards for flu vaccines. More information about the safety of flu vaccines is available at [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/vaccinesafety.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/vaccinesafety.htm).

What are the side effects of flu vaccines?

**Flu shots:** Flu shots are made using killed flu viruses (for inactivated vaccines), or without flu virus at all (for the recombinant vaccine). So, you cannot get flu from a flu shot. Some minor side effects that may occur include soreness, redness and/or swelling where the shot was given, low grade fever, and aches.

**Nasal spray flu vaccines:** The viruses in nasal spray flu vaccines are weakened and do not cause the severe symptoms often associated with influenza illness. For adults, side effects from the nasal spray may include runny nose, headache, sore throat, and cough. For children, side effects may also include wheezing, vomiting, muscle aches, and fever.

If these problems occur, they are usually mild and go away on their own, but serious reactions are also possible. Almost all people who receive flu vaccine have no serious problems from it.

When and Where to get vaccinated?

You should get a flu vaccine by the end of October. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating, vaccination should continue throughout flu season, even in January or later.

Flu vaccines are offered in many doctors’ offices and clinics. Flu vaccine is available in many other locations, including health departments, pharmacies, urgent care clinics, health centers, and travel clinics. Vaccines may also be offered at your school, college health center, or workplace. Visit: [www.vaccinefinder.org](http://www.vaccinefinder.org) to find a flu vaccination clinic near you.

For more information, visit: [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO
**GOOD NUTRITION HELPS SUPPORT YOUR IMMUNE HEALTH**

The immune system is the body’s defense against infections. When it's working well, the immune system can help protect against illnesses and infections.

There are several key factors that help keep your immune system healthy and strong. Some of these factors include adequate rest, regular exercise, good hygiene, decreased stress, and a healthy diet.

Poor nutritional status is associated with decreased immune health. Including key nutrients as part of a well-balanced diet can improve your nutrition, and may help support and maintain your immune health.

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**YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER CHOOSING FOODS THAT INCLUDE:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>Vitamin C</th>
<th>Vitamin A</th>
<th>Vitamin E</th>
<th>Vitamin D</th>
<th>Zinc</th>
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<tr>
<td>Helps build antibodies and immune system cells and plays an important role in healing and recovery. Sources: Eggs, milk, yogurt, fish, lean meats, chicken, turkey, beans, soy products, and nuts and seeds.</td>
<td>Helps build healthy skin, which is a barrier to microorganisms, and helps protect cells from damage due to its role as an antioxidant (a substance that helps protect cells). Sources: Citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruits, tangerines), strawberries, papaya, bell peppers, and Brussels sprouts.</td>
<td>Keeps the skin, tissues in the mouth, stomach, and intestines, and the respiratory system healthy, and it helps regulate the immune system. Sources: Colorful foods like carrots, sweet potatoes, broccoli, spinach, pumpkin, squash, and cantaloupe.</td>
<td>Protects immune cells from damage due to its role as an antioxidant. Sources: Almonds, sunflower seeds, peanut butter, vegetable oil, spinach, and broccoli.</td>
<td>Helps with properly regulating immune cell function. Sources: Fortified foods (milk, cereal, orange juice), fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna), and sunshine.</td>
<td>Supports creation of new immune cells, which contributes to the body’s ability to heal from wounds. Sources: Lean meats, chicken, turkey, crab, oysters, milk, whole grains, seeds.</td>
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Beet Greens

Beet greens are the leafy green tops of beet roots (beets). In Indiana, beets are in season from May to November but are readily available in the grocery store outside of these months.

These edible greens are low in calories and contain Vitamins A, C, and K, fiber, calcium, iron, and other nutrients. Beet greens also contain nitrates, which help to lower blood pressure.

Beet greens can be used in salads and smoothies and can be sauteed, boiled, steamed, or substituted for spinach or chard. When choosing beet greens, look for healthy leaves that are not wilted and do not have yellow spots. Greens should be stored with a damp paper towel or in an unsealed bag in the refrigerator and used within one to two days.

**Sauteed Beet Greens**

**Recipe Courtesy:** [https://www.eatgathergo.org/recipe/sauteed-beet-greens/](https://www.eatgathergo.org/recipe/sauteed-beet-greens/)

**Servings:** 3 servings     **Serving Size:** 1/3 cup

**Nutrition Information:**
Calories 45, Total Fat 3g, Sodium 190mg, Total Carbohydrate 4 g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 2g, Calcium 78mg, Iron 2mg, Potassium 494mg, Vitamin C 20mg

**Ingredients:**
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
4 cups chopped beet greens (2 bunches with stems removed)
2 cloves garlic, minced or 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 pinch salt

**Directions:**

2. Add the beet greens and garlic to the pan. Stir until just wilted, then reduce the heat to low and stir occasionally for 5 to 8 minutes until soft.

3. When done, stir in lemon juice, red pepper flakes and salt. Serve now or use in another recipe.