Airborne ? does it cure/prevent colds? [1]

Hey Alice!

How's it going? Well, it is the winter season here in New York City and with the bacteria generated in the subways I am in constant fear of catching a cold. Does that stuff Airborne work? I know it was created by a teacher but does that mean it works? Well, I really need this response, it's on sale at the local pharmacy. Thanks!

Much love,
To sneeze or not to sneeze?

Answer

Dear To sneeze or not to sneeze,

People in the United States spend billions of dollars a year trying to escape the misery of the common cold. Though some swear by remedies ranging from vitamin C to garlic to exercise, scientists have not conclusively found anything that will prevent, cure, or shorten the course of the common cold. The manufacturers of Airborne claim that the unique combination of herbs, amino acids, antioxidants, and electrolytes "offers vitamin and mineral support for hours," and imply that it helps the body fight bacteria and viruses by boosting the immune system. They have withdrawn their original claims that their product cures or prevents colds.

In addition to vitamins, Airborne contains Echinacea [2], an herbal supplement some people take on its own for colds or the flu. Similar to research on vitamin C, studies draw a mix of conclusions about whether Echinacea works in preventing or treating colds. There are many products on the market, as well as natural remedies, that successfully treat the symptoms of the cold: body aches, sore throat, stuffy nose. However, as of yet, there is no proven cure.

Some people may feel that Airborne works for them, but it's tough to say conclusively. Colds can last anywhere from one to ten days and a person's immune system will eventually fight it off, even without vitamins or supplements. There has been one study on the effectiveness of Airborne. The clinical trial was a double-blind, placebo study, meaning that neither the researchers nor the participants knew who took the real supplement and who took the placebo until after the trial ended. The study found that Airborne out-performed the placebo, however many people question the potential bias of this study because the research was conducted by the manufacturer.

Additionally, some people have expressed concern about the amount of vitamins A and C contained in Airborne. According to the Food and Drug Administration, the average adult
should have 5000 units of vitamin A each day, and 60mg of vitamin C. One dose of Airborne contains 5000 units of A and 1000mg of C, and the package recommends taking a dose every three hours. That means taking significantly more than the recommended daily allowance of both. Overdosing on vitamin A may cause nausea, vomiting, headache and dizziness. Too much C can cause diarrhea and excess gas.

Subways and other enclosed spaces with many people can be germy, especially in cold season. Medical professionals say your best defense against the common cold is maintaining a healthy lifestyle. That includes: eating a balanced diet, being physically active, and getting plenty of sleep. On top of that, thorough hand washing with soap and water, especially before you eat, can keep the subway germs at bay. So, before you go out and buy the new very berry flavor of Airborne or a similar supplement, it might be wise to take its claims with a grain of salt (mix with 8 ounces of water and gargle!).

Alice!
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