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Keep warm to avoid colds: scientists

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15 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Keep warm to avoid colds: scientists

For many years people have said that catching a cold because of cold weather is an old wives' tale. Now scientists have found that keeping warm really can help stop colds. Researchers from the Common Cold Center at Britain's Cardiff University have discovered that cold weather is a major cause of catching a cold. The center is the only laboratory in the world that researches and tests new medicines for influenza and colds. The researchers recommend wearing a hat and keeping your feet dry to avoid colds. They also suggest you somehow keep your nose warm when outside in cold weather.

Dr. Ronald Eccles, team leader at the Cold Center, said we are more likely to become ill in cold weather. He said the cold makes the blood vessels in the nose narrower, which reduces our ability to fight viruses inside the nose. Dr. Eccles studied 180 people in his study. Half of his volunteers put their feet in bowls of freezing cold water for 20 minutes, while the others kept their feet dry. Dr. Eccles found that 29 percent of those who kept their feet in the icy water caught colds within five days, compared with nine percent for those who kept their socks on. Dr. Eccles advised children "to wrap up well in winter".

WARM-UPS

1. MY HEALTH: Talk to your partner(s) about health. Have you been healthy all of this year? Do you catch colds easily? Is your body strong? Do you ever take days off sick? Find out who is the healthiest person in the class.

2. AVOIDING COLDS: What do you do to avoid colds? Discuss with your partner(s) the ideas below. Why do you think they could prevent colds? Which ones would you like to try?

- Don't touch your nose and eyes
- Gargle three times a day
- Drink a glass of red wine every day
- Wash your hands after shaking hands
- Sleep 8 to 10 hours every night
- Don't smoke
- Wear a hat and two pairs of socks
- Eat lots of oranges and grapefruits
- Be sure to eat breakfast every day
- Drink lots of chicken soup

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Catching colds / old wives' tales / keeping warm / cold weather / catching colds / influenza / hats / blood vessels / viruses / icy water / socks / children / winter

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. WARM: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "warm". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. OLD WIVES' TALES: Talk about these "old wives' tales" with your partner. Do you think they are true? Are there similar tales in your country? Why do you think people believe these?

- a. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
- b. Count the seeds inside an apple to find out how many children you will have.
- c. It's bad luck to sleep with your head facing north.
- d. Blow out all the candles on your birthday cake in one puff and you dreams will come true.
- e. If you get goose bumps, it means someone is walking over your grave.
- f. If you step on a crack in the pavement, bad luck will come.
- g. Friday the 13th is an unlucky day.
- h. Pulling out one gray hair will make ten more gray hairs grow in its place.
- i. Hanging a horseshoe above the doorway of your house will bring good luck.
- j. If you dream about a snake, something bad in your life will disappear.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A scientist said taking a sauna is the best way to prevent a cold. | T / F |
| b. A scientist reports that wrapping up warm helps keep colds away. | T / F |
| c. There are many centers in the world researching medicines for colds. | T / F |
| d. Keeping your nose warm will not protect you against colds. | T / F |
| e. Cold weather widens the blood vessels in the nose. | T / F |
| f. Volunteers put their feet in freezing cold water for 20 minutes. | T / F |
| g. Nine percent of volunteers who kept their socks on caught a cold. | T / F |
| h. A doctor advised children to wrap up well in summer. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| a. catching | dress warmly |
| b. really | scientists |
| c. discovered | getting |
| d. researchers | probable |
| e. suggest | found |
| f. likely | infections |
| g. narrower | recommend |
| h. viruses | icy |
| i. freezing | tighter |
| j. wrap up well | truly |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| a. catching a cold because of cold weather | cause of catching a cold |
| b. keeping warm really can | ill in cold weather |
| c. cold weather is a major | in bowls of freezing cold water |
| d. and tests new medicines | help stop colds |
| e. somehow keep your nose warm | to wrap up well in winter |
| f. we are more likely to become | is an old wives' tale |
| g. the cold makes the blood | the icy water caught colds |
| h. volunteers put their feet | when outside in cold weather |
| i. those who kept their feet in | vessels in the nose narrower |
| j. Dr. Eccles advised children | for influenza and colds |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Keep warm to avoid colds: scientists

For many years people have said that _____ a cold because of cold weather is an old _____ tale. Now scientists have found that keeping warm _____ can help stop colds. Researchers from the Common Cold Center at Britain's Cardiff University have discovered that cold weather is a _____ cause of catching a cold. The center is the only laboratory in the world that researches and _____ new medicines for influenza and colds. The researchers recommend wearing a hat and keeping your feet _____ to avoid colds. They also suggest you _____ keep your nose warm when _____ in cold weather.

Dr. Ronald Eccles, team _____ at the Cold Center, said we are more _____ to become ill in cold weather. He said the cold makes the _____ vessels in the nose narrower, which reduces our _____ to fight viruses inside the nose. Dr. Eccles studied 180 people in his study. Half of his volunteers put their feet in _____ of freezing cold water for 20 minutes, while the others _____ their feet dry. Dr. Eccles found that 29 percent of those who kept their feet in the icy water caught colds _____ five days, compared with nine percent for those who kept their socks on. Dr. Eccles advised children "to _____ up well in winter".

major
somehow
dry
really
catching
outside
tests
wives'

blood
bowls
likely
wrap
ability
within
leader
kept

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Keep warm to avoid colds: scientists

For many years people have said that _____ a cold because of cold weather is an old wives' tale. Now _____ have found that keeping warm really can help stop colds. Researchers from the _____ Cold Center at Britain's Cardiff University have discovered that cold weather is a _____ cause of catching a cold. The center is the only laboratory in the world that researches and tests new _____ for influenza and colds. The researchers _____ wearing a hat and keeping your feet dry to avoid colds. They also suggest you _____ keep your nose warm when outside in cold weather.

Dr. Ronald Eccles, team leader at the Cold Center, said we are more _____ to become ill in cold weather. He said the cold makes the blood vessels in the nose _____, which reduces our ability to fight _____ inside the nose. Dr. Eccles studied 180 people in his study. Half of his volunteers put their feet in bowls of _____ cold water for 20 minutes, while the others kept their feet _____. Dr. Eccles found that 29 percent of those who kept their feet in the icy water caught colds within five days, _____ with nine percent for those who kept their socks on. Dr. Eccles advised children "to _____ - _____ well in winter".

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'cold' and 'weather'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "COLDS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about colds, cold weather and our health.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| • tale | • likely |
| • really | • blood |
| • major | • bowls |
| • world | • 29 percent |
| • dry | • compared |
| • somehow | • children |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What were you told about colds when you were young?
- c. Do you think all of the health advice your mother gave you was correct?
- d. Do you catch cold easily?
- e. Do you prefer freezing cold or boiling hot weather?
- f. What do you think is the best way to avoid catching a cold?
- g. Why do you think there is only one research center in the world that tests new medicines for colds?
- h. Are you worried about avian bird flu?
- i. What's the worst cold you've ever had?
- j. Will you wrap up warm from now on?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you do anything to keep colds away?
- d. Do you take a lot of time off work / school through being ill?
- e. Do you think the bowl of icy water study method in the article really proves that wrapping up warm helps avoid colds?
- f. Would you like to be a volunteer in such tests?
- g. When do you think scientists will find a cure for colds and influenza?
- h. Do you ever have to stay in bed because you caught a cold?
- i. What old wives' tales do you know and believe to be true?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

HEALTH PROBLEMS: You are a health worker. Interview three other “health workers” in the class and make a note of their suggestions about how to avoid or help the problems in the left hand column:

PROBLEM	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
A cold			
Inability to sleep			
Hiccups (USA) Hiccoughs (UK)			
Bad breath			
B.O. (body odor)			
Tired eyes			
A hangover			
Inability to remember English vocabulary			

- Change partners and show each other your findings.
- Discuss your findings and agree on the best idea for each problem.
- Present your ideas to the rest of the class.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the common cold. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. STAYING HEALTHY: Make a poster explaining some simple ways of keeping healthy. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. OLD WIVES' TALES: Make a short list of some old wives' tales from your country. Try to explain their history. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Were your old wives' tales similar to those found by your partners?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. F e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| a. catching | getting |
| b. really | truly |
| c. discovered | found |
| d. researchers | scientists |
| e. suggest | recommend |
| f. likely | probable |
| g. narrower | tighter |
| h. viruses | infections |
| i. freezing | icy |
| j. wrap up well | dress warmly |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| a. catching a cold because of cold weather | is an old wives' tale |
| b. keeping warm really can | help stop colds |
| c. cold weather is a major | cause of catching a cold |
| d. and tests new medicines | for influenza and colds |
| e. somehow keep your nose warm | when outside in cold weather |
| f. we are more likely to become | ill in cold weather |
| g. the cold makes the blood | vessels in the nose narrower |
| h. volunteers put their feet | in bowls of freezing cold water |
| i. those who kept their feet in | the icy water caught colds |
| j. Dr. Eccles advised children | to wrap up well in winter |

GAP FILL:

Keep warm to avoid colds: scientists

For many years people have said that **catching** a cold because of cold weather is an old **wives'** tale. Now scientists have found that keeping warm **really** can help stop colds. Researchers from the Common Cold Center at Britain's Cardiff University have discovered that cold weather is a **major** cause of catching a cold. The center is the only laboratory in the world that researches and **tests** new medicines for influenza and colds. The researchers recommend wearing a hat and keeping your feet **dry** to avoid colds. They also suggest you **somehow** keep your nose warm when **outside** in cold weather.

Dr. Ronald Eccles, team **leader** at the Cold Center, said we are more **likely** to become ill in cold weather. He said the cold makes the **blood** vessels in the nose narrower, which reduces our **ability** to fight viruses inside the nose. Dr. Eccles studied 180 people in his study. Half of his volunteers put their feet in **bowls** of freezing cold water for 20 minutes, while the others **kept** their feet dry. Dr. Eccles found that 29 percent of those who kept their feet in the icy water caught colds **within** five days, compared with nine percent for those who kept their socks on. Dr. Eccles advised children "to **wrap** up well in winter".