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FOLK MEDICINE:

Folk Beliefs on
colds and flu

by

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The person interviewed is a 22-year-old female. She is a student at Western Kentucky University and is working toward a degree in psychology with a minor in recreation. She was born in Harrisburg, PA on January 2, 1963. Her parents moved to Henderson, KY when she was three and has since lived there. The subject is a Caucasian, and her religion is Episcopalian. She likes to listen to music, read, dance, camp, and travel.

Her folk beliefs about the symptoms and treatments of the flu and other cold-related illnesses are as follows:

1. Takes aspirin when she feels like she's catching a cold.
2. Drinks orange juice or some type of Vitamin C. (Brown, 1066 - If you feel a chill coming on, eat a lemon and it will keep it off.)
3. Relaxes.
4. Takes her temperature frequently.
5. Doesn't allow others to eat or drink out of contaminated utensils.
6. Takes over-the-counter drugs - (such as Contact, sinus tablets, cough medicine, etc.)
7. Doesn't eat spicy foods.
8. Eats chicken noodle soup. (Brown, 1113 - Hot

onion soup should be taken before retiring.)

9. Dresses warmly. (Brown, 1142 - For colds, bake the soles of feet by the fire; 1457 - To get rid of fever, wrap the patient in many blankets and he will "sweat the fever off"; 1138 - Wear red flannel underclothes to keep off cold in the winter; 1148 - Keep hot water bags around person to cure a fever.)
10. Doesn't drink any liquor during cold symptoms.
11. Gargles warm salt water for sore throat. (Brown, 1097 - If your throat itches, it is a sign you are going to have a cold; 1091 - Wear salt in your shoes for chills and fevers; 1461 - Vinegar and salt bound to one is a good cure for fever; 1536 - Bicarbonate of soda mixed with a few grains of salt dissolved in water, is effective as a gargle.)