

Mayo Clinic Minute: Why do people get sick with viruses in the winter?

Video	Audio
	It is true that people are more likely to get sick in the winter.
<p>Matthew Binnicker, Ph.D. Laboratory Medicine and Pathology Mayo Clinic</p>	<p>"Most people think that it's just due to more people being indoors, which I think plays some role in it."</p>
	<p>Dr. Matthew Binnicker says another factor is humidity.</p>
	<p>"In the warmer months, there's more humidity. And when we speak, when we cough, when we sneeze, the larger amounts of moisture in the air causes whatever droplets we release from a cough, sneeze or talking to be bigger, those droplets are larger in size, and they fall to the ground, they fall to the floor faster."</p>
	<p>But, in the winter, when the air is drier, those droplets that may contain a virus can hang in the air for longer periods of time.</p>
	<p>"And they can spread further."</p>
	<p>It also turns out that a person's immunity is not functioning as well in the winter months.</p>
	<p>"Cilia, which are these small, hairlike projections that usually are moving foreign objects out of our nose. And those cilia don't function as well during cooler temperatures and lower humidity. So a virus is able to persist in our upper respiratory tract for longer periods of time."</p>
	<p>For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm DeeDee Stiepan.</p>