

Flu Prevention Tips

- Keep tissues handy for coughs and sneezes. Then dispose of tissues in a "no-touch" container. This is a container that is emptied without touching the contents.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or arm NOT your hands, and teach children to do the same. Droplets from coughing or sneezing can contain viruses that can cause other people to become sick. If you cough or sneeze into your hands, everything that you touch with your hands may expose others if they come in contact with those same surfaces.
- Clean children's toys frequently to cut down on the number of germs, especially toys that can be put in the mouth.
- If you are sick with a cold or flu, stay home and away from other people if possible. You will prevent the spread of your illness to others and also protect yourself from the more serious side effects of the flu or colds.
- Don't stack coats in the workplace, childcare facilities, or other public areas. Stacking of coats can pass on cold or flu germs as well as ringworm and lice.
- In the workplace, avoid sharing common items such as phones and computer keyboards. If you have to share, then wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Enclosed areas should be ventilated periodically to get rid of germs in the air. Consider opening a window in your home in a room that is not occupied to let some fresh air in.
- Wash your hands frequently throughout the day. Always remember to turn off faucets with a paper towel. Teach your children the same healthy habits.
- Caution! Flu germs found lurking under the mistletoe. If you have a cold or the flu, stay away. If you are healthy, consider yourself warned.
- Bring a hand sanitizer to work with you and use it periodically, especially if you have a cold. You may want to apply a hand moisturizer or lotion to combat dryness of your hands.
- Nail biters beware! The flu virus enters the body through the nose, eyes and mouth. This is a good time to break the habit.
- Mark your calendar for October 2005 and look for information on getting the flu vaccine for you and your children.
- Don't worry. Be happy. Recent studies show that stress can weaken resistance to illness in some people.
- Is shaking hands really necessary? Consider a pat on the back or a respectful nod. And a kiss on the cheek? Think about it!
- Have children in diapers? Remember to wash their hands as well as your own after diaper changing.
- Do you know the right way to wash your hands? Wash your hands with soap (bacterial soap is not necessary) and water for about 20 seconds. What is "20 seconds"? Sing the Alphabet Song, or Yankee Doodle, or Happy Birthday. Rinse hands, dry with a paper towel and turn the faucets off using the paper towel. Get your children in this habit while they are young.
- Drink plenty of fluids when you are well and when you are ill. Your body can easily become dehydrated when you have a fever. Extra fluids will keep the mucous more liquid, which can help prevent bacterial complications such as ear infections and bronchitis.
- Be a germ detective. Where are germs hiding in your bathroom? Faucet handles, toilet seats, flush handles on toilets and doorknobs should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Consider using paper towels for drying hands after going to the bathroom. A hand towel that everyone in the family uses is an easy way to spread germs, particularly if someone already has a cold or the flu.
- An apple a day keeps the doctor away...NOT! An apple and 4 or more fruits and vegetables, some protein, and a little fat can help you stay healthy any time of the year.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as blankets, pillows or clothing with someone who has the cold or the flu. Germs can live for a short time on them.
- Anti-viral medication can prevent the flu for some people or shorten the duration of illness for those who already have symptoms. It must be given within 48 hours of exposure or start of symptoms and a doctor must prescribe it. It may be beneficial for those who are at high risk of complications from the flu.
- Did you know that a person can pass the flu germ to other people starting a day before he or she becomes ill? And some people can have the flu but have no symptoms or have very mild symptoms and still spread the flu to other people? Maybe a shopping center isn't the best place to take your new baby.
- Get some fresh air daily. Your lungs will thank you for it.

