

Practice Healthy Habits to Avoid Illness This Holiday Season

November 19, 2018, Detroit, MI – Southeastern Michigan Health Association (SEMHA) and public health partners throughout southeast Michigan encourage residents to practice healthy habits to protect themselves and others against colds and flu. Flu activity increases during the holidays, as people are gathering and spending time together in close contact. Therefore, it's important to take steps that decrease the risk of illness.

Practice these healthy habits to protect yourself and others against colds and flu:

- **Get your flu shot.** Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every year. Flu vaccine can reduce flu related illnesses and the risk of serious flu complications.
- **Wash hands often.** Proper hand washing prevents germs from spreading. Wash hands after using the restroom, changing a diaper, sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose, and before eating and/or preparing food. Wet hands and apply soap. Rub hands for at least 20 seconds (singing the "Happy Birthday" song twice is a good way to ensure that you spend enough time), scrubbing all surfaces, before rinsing and drying hands.
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** Flu and cold germs can spread by kissing, hugging, shaking hands, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces.** Germs can live on surfaces for hours and sometimes days. Clean surfaces often with soap and water, and disinfect areas like kitchens and bathrooms regularly – especially if someone in the house is ill. Look for an EPA registered disinfectant, or use unscented household bleach (1 tbsp. of bleach to 1 gallon of cool water). Let surfaces air dry after applying disinfectant.
- **Stay home when sick,** to rest and recover more quickly and prevent germs from spreading to others.
- **Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue.** The air that comes out of your mouth when you cough or sneeze may contain germs. Always throw away the tissue and wash your hands afterwards.

Flu shots are available through health providers, many pharmacies and local health departments:

Oakland County Health Division

248-848-5533 (Nurse on Call)

<https://www.oakgov.com/health/services/Pages/Immunizations.aspx>

Social Media @publichealthOC

Media contact: Dr. Russell Faust, 248-858-1276 or health@oakgov.com

Washtenaw County Health Department

734-544-6700

www.washtenaw.org/flu

Social Media @wcpublichealth

Media contact: Susan Ringler Cerniglia, 734-544-6759
or ringlers@washtenaw.org

Wayne County Health Department

734-727-7101

<https://www.waynecounty.com/departments/hvcw/wellness-services.aspx>

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