

Top 10 Tips To Avoid Catching The Flu

Easy Ways To Stay Healthy Through The Holiday Season

NEWS

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Ontario is offering everyone ten helpful tips to stay healthy and reduce the risk of spreading the flu and other viruses to your friends and family this holiday season.

1. The best way to avoid the flu: Get the flu shot. It's free.

The flu shot helps your body build the defenses it needs to protect you from the flu. It can prevent the flu from taking hold up to 90 per cent of the time among healthy adults and children.

2. Wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly and often.

Proper hand cleaning guards against and limits the spread of many illnesses. Viruses can live on your hands for up to five minutes and they can live on hard surfaces – like counter tops and telephones – for up to two days. Wash hands for at least 15 seconds.

3. Keep alcohol-based hand sanitizer handy.

Hand sanitizer needs to be at least 60 per cent alcohol to be effective. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are as good as soap and water to clean your hands. But if your hands are visibly dirty, wash with soap and water.

4. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

Cough into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue. The droplets that come out when we cough or sneeze can carry the flu virus and land on other people or surfaces.

5. Stay home from work if you are sick.

When you're not feeling well, the best thing you can do for your own health and the health of your co-workers is to stay home.

6. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

The flu virus usually enters the body through the eyes, nose or mouth, and your hands touch objects and surfaces that may have viruses on them, including the flu virus.

7. Avoid large crowds of people where viruses can spread easily.

This might be a challenge when you're shopping and socializing during the holidays. Stay aware of your health and the health of others when you're out and about. Avoid people who are sneezing and coughing and wash your hands regularly.

8. Clean germ-spreading surfaces like purses or gloves.

These items come in contact with contaminated surfaces when you set them down on areas like tables and countertops, spreading germs and viruses. Wipe these surfaces with disinfecting cleaner regularly.

9. Eat well, exercise and get enough rest.

Keeping your immune system strong will lessen your chances of getting sick. Eat well, exercise regularly and get enough sleep to keep your health in top shape.

10. Did we mention get your flu shot?

We can't emphasize this enough. The flu shot is the most effective way to avoid the flu. Get the vaccine for free at your doctor's office.

QUOTES

"I want everyone to have a healthy and happy winter in Ontario. No one wants to get the flu, but luckily there are some simple steps you can take to avoid getting sick -- including getting your free flu shot. Let's all do our part to stay healthy and prevent the spread of flu."

– Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

"We've all learned a lot about reducing the spread of flu in our communities. I see people taking these precautions all the time and I encourage everyone to keep it up. We owe it to the people we spend time with to do what we can to stay healthy and avoid catching the flu."

– Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health

QUICK FACTS

- You cannot get the flu from receiving the flu shot.
- The flu can leave people ill for up to seven days and can lead to serious health problems such as pneumonia.
- Flu strains can change every year. The vaccine that protected you last year may not fully protect you from the type of flu going around this year.
- The elderly, young children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems are especially at high risk of flu-related complications.

LEARN MORE

Use the [online self assessment tool](#) to find out if you have a cold or the flu.

Find a [flu shot clinic](#) near you. Visit Ontario.ca/flu or call 1-877-844-1944.

Find out more about the [flu vaccine](#).

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

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