

Tips for Staying Healthy During Flu and Cold Season

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DENVER — Cold viruses are present year-round but the the incidence of colds rise sharply in early fall, shortly after school begins. The flu typically arrives later, in November, with the peak season from late December through early March.

There are many different cold and influenza viruses. These viruses typically are spread by sneezing, coughing or touching a contaminated surface. For example, a person with cold touches his nose and then touches a doorknob.

Fortunately, there are several things you can do to lessen your chances of getting sick:

- **Wash your hands frequently.** Since your hands are the most common vehicle for carrying germs into your body, you should scrub vigorously with soap and water for 10-15 seconds to keep them as germ-free as possible. Wash after using the bathroom, before handling food, before eating, and any other time you think you might have picked up germs.
- **Avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth.** You can't keep all the germs off your hands all the time. So, keep your hands away from germs' most common entryway into the body.
- **Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.** Don't spread your germs to others.
- **Use disposable tissue.** And wipe your nose in a way that keeps secretions on the tissue and doesn't contaminate your hands.
- **Get a yearly flu vaccine.** This is especially important for people with asthma and other respiratory diseases.

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