

Stay healthy during cold, flu and virus season



No one wants to be under the weather, so to keep from getting sick, it's important to take steps to stop the spread of germs. If you have a chronic condition like diabetes or high blood pressure, you may be at greater risk of complications from viruses, including the common cold, flu and COVID-19.

Luckily, there are simple steps you can take to prevent the spread of germs and avoid getting sick. Here are a few strategies you can use to stay well.



Get vaccinated

The best way to protect yourself against the flu and COVID-19 is by getting an annual seasonal flu vaccine and a COVID-19 vaccine. Getting the flu or COVID-19 can lead to hospitalization and even death; the vaccine cuts your risk of getting the flu or COVID-19 and makes you less likely to need to go to the hospital if you did catch either virus.



Keep your distance

Avoid close contact with people who are sick to help keep germs away. When you're feeling under the weather, return the favor. Stay home to keep from spreading your illness to others.



Cover up

When you cough or sneeze, block your mouth and nose with a tissue. Dispose of tissues in a lined wastebasket and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer afterward. Respiratory illnesses like the flu and COVID-19 are spread by coughing, sneezing or unclean hands; covering up your cough or sneeze can help prevent germs from spreading.



Be mindful of your hands

Do your best to keep your hands away from your face. When a person touches germ-contaminated hands to their eyes, nose or mouth, they can become infected.



Wear a mask

If you are feeling under the weather or want to prevent catching the flu or COVID-19, wear a protective face covering. A mask provides an added layer of protection against the spread of germs and has the added benefit of keeping you from touching your nose or mouth unconsciously. Masks are still required in many places, even for those who are vaccinated against COVID-19, like on public transportation or airplanes, so be sure to check with local officials on rules and regulations in your area.



Clean surfaces

Wipe down counters, doorknobs and other frequently touched surfaces at home and at work. This is extra important if someone around you is sick.



Take care of your overall health

The better your health, the better your body will be able to fight off germs. Be sure to get plenty of sleep, eat a healthy diet, drink water and other fluids, stay active and manage stress.



Wash well

It's simple but true: Handwashing prevents illness. Follow these five steps every time you wash to stop the spread of germs:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water. Turn off the tap and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands—focus on the backs of your hands, between fingers and under nails.
3. Scrub for at least 20 seconds (sing "Happy Birthday" twice if you need a timer).
4. Rinse your hands under running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel.

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