



Help your family stay well

It's a fact that families share more than just quality time together—they share some unwelcome germs too.

A cold or flu in one family member often means that sickness will soon make the rounds at home. However, these tips can help your family stay well during cold and flu season.

Practice prevention The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each year. A yearly vaccination is particularly important for those at high risk of complications—such as people over 50 and those with chronic health problems. Also, health experts now recommend that children from 6 months to 18 years old get a yearly flu shot. Check with your doctor about which family members need the flu vaccine.

In addition, some people, including those with chronic health problems or people older than 65, may need a

vaccination against bacterial pneumonia.

While there isn't a cold vaccine yet, you can remind everyone to practice these healthy habits:

- ▶ Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.
- ▶ Wash your hands often with warm water and soap. Scrub for about 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice). Use paper towels for drying hands.
- ▶ Keep your distance from sick people.

When sickness strikes Sure, we don't have a cure for the common cold, but you can feel better while you recover. To ease cold and flu symptoms, the American Academy of Family Physicians recommends that you:

- ▶ Get lots of rest, especially while a fever is present.
- ▶ Drink

plenty of fluids, such as water and clear soups. ▶ Gargle with warm salt water to relieve a sore throat, or use sprays and lozenges.

You also can try over-the-counter medicines for a headache, stuffy nose, cough,

and other symptoms. However, kids and teens should not take aspirin, because it may increase their risk for a serious disease called Reye's syndrome, and nonprescription cold medicines may not be safe for younger children.

Also, you can ask your doctor about antiviral medicines to help you recover more quickly from the flu.

Most people recover from colds or the flu within a few days or a week. Seek a doctor's advice for symptoms such as a high fever, illness that lasts for 10 days or any breathing problems.

Additional sources: American Lung Association; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The best way to prevent the flu is to get a yearly flu shot.



To learn more about cold and flu prevention, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at cdc.gov.