

2009 Influenza Prevention



How is influenza spread?

- Flu is spread person-to-person mainly by coughs and sneezes.
- People may also get flu after touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their own mouths or noses.
- You cannot become infected by eating poultry, pork, or any other specific foods.

How can I avoid getting the flu?

- **By far, the single best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated.**
- Practicing good health habits can help your immune system work best to fight off infection.
- Get plenty of sleep, physical activity, fluids, and nutritious foods.
- Everyday actions can help prevent the spread of germs that cause many respiratory infections.

What everyday actions can help prevent flu?

- Wash your hands often, particularly after you cough or sneeze.
- If you can't wash your hands, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid close contact with people you know are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
- If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.

How should I

clean objects and surfaces?

- Flu viruses have been shown to survive on surfaces and objects for 2 to 8 hours.
- Flu virus is killed by heat (167-212°F) and by cleaners containing chlorine, peroxide, detergents, iodine, and alcohol.
- Continue your usual cleaning, dishwashing, and laundering according to product labels.
- Linens, eating utensils, and dishes used by the sick do not need to be cleaned separately. But do not share these items without washing thoroughly first.

What else can I do to prevent infection?

- If there is widespread flu in your area, public health officials may recommend certain actions to prevent spread.
- Listen for and follow public health advice about avoiding crowded settings and other "social distancing" recommendations.
- Be prepared for possible school dismissal and other closings by arranging for child care and supplies you may need at home.

More information may be found at www.cdc.gov and www.dhd10.org.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used as a substitute for talking with a health care provider. If you have any questions, please talk with your health care provider.

District Health Department #10

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