

Stay Free of the Flu

What can you do to prevent getting the flu this year? **The number one most important thing is to get a flu shot.** The Advisory Board on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend all children ages 6 months and up get a flu shot. Even with a flu shot you have contact with many other germs that can make you sick (the common cold and strains of the flu that are not covered by the shot). There are some things we can all do to limit our chances of becoming sick:

- 1. Wash Hands.** Everyone should wash their hands after coughing or sneezing or whenever fingers touch the inside of the mouth or nose. Wash hands before preparing food, before and after eating and whenever hands are not clean. Also wash hands after touching another person who has a cough or cold. Everyone should cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and wash your hands immediately. You should also cough into your shoulder (not into your hand). Using an alcohol gel is an effective alternative when soap and water are unavailable. Wash your hands often.
- 2. Avoid Touching Your Eyes, Nose and Mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something contaminated and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth.
- 3. Stay Home When Ill.** People with fever, chills, sore throat, cough, headache and/or muscle aches should remain at home for 5-7 days after they first become ill or until symptoms have resolved. They should not go to work, school, day care or any other public gatherings. Visitors to households with ill persons should be limited.
- 4. Use Common Sense with Children.** Children under 6 months of age should not come into contact with people who have influenza symptoms. During the influenza season, newborns and young infants should be kept away from crowded settings such as shopping malls, theaters and other public gatherings.
- 5. Use Good Habits.** Don't smoke, get plenty of rest, exercise, manage stress, drink plenty of water, and eat healthy and nutritious food. Don't share cups, use disposable if possible and don't share towels.

Following these guidelines will reduce your risk of getting sick. Here's to a healthy winter season. Please call your friendly school nurse, Jill Sheeley, if you have any questions 262-424-2868.

