

Practice Healthy Habits To Stay Well

(NAPSA)—When it comes to the flu, the saying “Mother knows best,” often rings true. Common sense steps to protect yourself—like those Mom may have taught you years ago—can have a real impact when it comes to staying healthy and avoiding the flu this winter.

Many people think of the flu as nothing more than a bad cold. And for many, flu is a relatively mild illness. But, each year in the United States, influenza is responsible for an estimated 36,000 deaths and 200,000 hospitalizations. People at particular risk for complications from flu include people over age 65, children under age 2, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems or chronic health conditions like diabetes, heart disease or asthma.

Even perfectly healthy people can get the flu. So start taking steps today and throughout this winter to stay well and protect your friends and family from the flu. Flu season typically runs from November to April so it’s a great time to begin these healthy habits:

- Clean your hands often. Wash your hands with soap and water each time you cough or sneeze. Or stop germs by using alcohol-based gels or wipes.
- Cover your mouth and nose. Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze and immediately throw it away. If you don’t have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose the best you can with your arm or sleeve.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Influenza



The flu is nothing to sneeze at. Healthy habits can help prevent illness.

spreads easily from person to person through respiratory droplets in the air so keep your distance from others who are sick.

- Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work or errands when you are sick. And if your child is sick, keep him/her home from daycare, school, and other activities. This will help prevent others from catching the illness.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Flu is often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.

Simple healthy habits like these can help reduce illness and sick days this flu season. If you do get the flu, it’s important to see a doctor as soon as possible to begin treatment. Antiviral drugs can reduce the number of days you are sick if begun within the first two days of symptoms.

Visit www.cdc.gov/flu or call 1-800-CDC-INFO for more information.