

health hints



Tips On Avoiding The Flu And Common Cold

(NAPSA)—As far as most people are concerned, getting the flu or common cold is nothing to sneeze at. In a recent survey the flu and common cold ranked highest on a list of germ concerns for 2004.

The survey, conducted by Opinion Research Corporation for Kimberly-Clark Professional, found that 66 percent of people feared the flu most and 14 percent worried about getting the common cold.

Fortunately, there are ways to help protect against colds and the flu. Here are some suggestions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other sources:

- **Avoid close contact.** Try to avoid people who are sick. It's that simple.

- **Remember your mother's advice**—wash your hands. Frequent hand washing with soap and water will help protect you from germs. Wash hands for 15-20 seconds. Alcohol-based gels or hand rubs may also be used. Six in 10 people in the survey agreed—choosing frequent hand washing as the most important way to reduce the spread of germs.

- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.** Illnesses can be spread when someone touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.

- **Wash up after touching surfaces touched by others.** Some viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes to two hours or more on surfaces like telephones, doorknobs and desks. In fact, telephones led the list of germ-harboring office surfaces in another Kimberly-Clark survey. Doorknobs, door handles and the restroom followed.

- **Use a towel to turn off faucets and grab bathroom door handles after hand washing.** That way you won't be touching potentially contaminated surfaces with clean hands.

Here are some "respiratory etiquette" tips from the CDC for keeping your germs to yourself:

- **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you**



Remember your mother's advice. Frequent hand washing with soap and water—or with alcohol-based waterless hand cleaners—will help protect you from flu and cold germs.

- **cough or sneeze.** It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

- **After you use a tissue, throw it out.** The germs will go with it.

- **If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.** That way you won't spread germs when you touch things with your hands.

- **Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing.** Use soap and water or clean with an alcohol-based waterless hand cleanser. Forty-two percent of workers in the survey selected this as the one thing they would most like colleagues to do if they came to work sick.

- **Ask for a mask at the doctor's office if you have a respiratory illness.**

- **Lastly, if you can, stay home when you're sick.** If you stay away from work or errands when you are sick, you will help prevent others from catching your illness. This was the top choice among workers according to the Kimberly-Clark survey. After this, workers chose an arsenal of germ-fighting products including: waterless hand sanitizers for every desk, germ-killing paper towels and facial tissue, and antimicrobial soap.

Sometimes despite everyone's best efforts, illness still strikes. If it does, get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. Isn't that what Mom would say?