

Avoiding colds and flu

November 10 2015

Celebrating fall and looking forward to the holiday season is exciting for most of us. We look forward to bonfires, falling leaves, social gatherings and holiday events. We share laughs and visits with friends and family. Along with all the fun, we may be visited by some unwelcomed guests and share unwanted gifts—colds and flu. It is that time again. Colds and influenza (flu) make us miserable, and the flu even can be life threatening for some people. The University of Alabama's Dr. Debra Whisenant provides the following recommendations to decrease your risk of colds and flu and also to prevent the spread of both to others.

Three actions are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to prevent or avoid viruses, which cause [cold](#) and flu.

First Step: Get a [flu vaccine](#). Most everyone older than 6 months can have the vaccine.

Second Step: Consider common actions you can do to help stop the spread of illness causing germs.

- Stay away from individuals who are sick.
- If you are sick, do not expose yourself to others. Do not go to work, school or church if you are sick. You'll feel better soon and you will be more productive when you are well.
- Most importantly, wash your hands often.

Third Step: If you do get sick, take medications as prescribed by your physician or nurse practitioner.

- Anti-viral medications are available to treat the flu. Medications are available to treat symptoms of both flu and colds.
- Antibiotics will not treat colds or flu. Viruses cause colds and [flu](#), so antibiotics are not effective.

By following these simple guidelines, you may spend your fall and winter seasons healthy and not lose time with friends and family.

Provided by University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa

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