

## Ways to Stay Healthy During Cold and Flu Season

Children under 17 years of age in the United States, experience 52 million cases of the common cold each year. Because the common cold has no cure, prevention is considered the most **effective** treatment. Children are more susceptible to catching a cold or the flu virus because their immune systems are still developing. You can take certain precautions to avoid becoming infected with a virus during cold and flu season.

### Get Vaccinated

Although no vaccine exists for the common cold, you can get vaccinated against **the flu**. The Centers for Disease Control states that getting a flu vaccine once a year is the best step toward prevention during the cold and flu season. Children, the elderly and people in the medical profession are more prone to getting the flu. People with compromised immune systems, such as patients in cancer treatment or diagnosed with HIV, are also more susceptible. Many schools, health clinics and pharmacies offer the flu shot on an annual basis.

### Avoid Sick People

Stay away from people who appear to be sick. The viruses that lead to the cold and flu are both transmitted from human to human. Sneezing and coughing are common ways the viruses enter the air and affect surrounding people. KidsHealth.org states that cold and flu viruses can travel up to 12 feet from a sneeze or cough. If a child appears to be sick, she should be kept home until symptoms diminish. If sick, steer clear of public places to avoid infecting other people.

### Sanitize

Sanitize objects touched by other people, such as children's toys, computer boards and countertops. Use disinfectants to kill viruses that could lead to the common cold or flu. Use a bleach water solution (one part bleach to ten parts water), to soak toys, dishware and other shared household items in the sink.

### Wash Your Hands

Proper **hand washing** is an effective way of killing infectious viruses on the skin, according to MayoClinic.com. Wash hands often with soap and water, and use hand sanitizers when hand washing is not available, according to the CDC. Teach children to wash their hands properly and often. Wash the hands after touching public items, such as doorknobs or shopping carts, and after sneezing or using the bathroom.

### **Use Tissues Or Cough In Your Sleeve**

Use tissues or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing and never pick up another person's used tissue. If touched, the mucus from a sick person can infect another person. Throw tissues away as soon as they are used.