

PREVENT ILLNESS OVER THE HOLIDAYS

District Health Department #10 Kicks Off “Healthy Habits” Month

December 1, 2017– With the holidays upon us, it is easy to put aside our health as we focus on celebrating the season with family and friends. But the holidays fall in the middle of the annual flu season; close quarters, stress and lack of sleep during this time of year can make us more vulnerable to illness increasing the need to avoid the spread of germs.

“One of the most important steps a person can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others is keeping their hands clean,” said Dr. Jennifer Morse, Medical Director for District Health Department #10 (DHD#10). “Adults and children should wash their hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing and before eating.”

Hand washing is simple! Just follow these steps:

- **Wet** your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together. Be sure to get the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. This is about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.
- **Rinse** hands well under running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. Sharing cloth towels can spread germs. If possible, use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.

In addition to hand washing, there are several other good health habits to practice now and throughout the rest of the winter season that can help your body stay healthy and fight off the flu and other illness. Public health professionals in Michigan recommend the following:

- Eat a balanced diet including plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grain products.
- Drink plenty of water and go easy on salt, sugar, alcohol and saturated fat.
- Exercise regularly. Thirty or more minutes of physical activity most days of the week can help boost your immunity.
- Get plenty of rest. Sleep is shown to help your body fight off illness.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread this way.
- Stay away from people who are sick as much as you can.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school.

“At this time of year, sickness and disease are the last things anyone should have to worry about, which is precisely why we should not let preventable health conditions get in the way,” stated Dr. Morse.

About DHD #10

District Health Department #10 (DHD #10) is Michigan's largest geographical health department, mandated to promote and protect the public from unsafe and hazardous conditions and provide methods of promoting good health and disease prevention.



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Some of the vital programs provided by DHD #10 include Immunizations, Infectious Disease Control, STI Testing and Counseling, WIC, Maternal Infant Health Program, Healthy Families Northern Michigan, Children's Special Health Services, Hearing and Vision Screening, Family Planning, Cancer Screening, Worksite Wellness, Smoking Cessation, Substance Use Prevention, Chronic Disease Prevention, and Environmental Health Services. DHD #10 serves Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Newaygo, Oceana, and Wexford counties. For more information, visit www.dhd10.org.

Additional information about the "Public Health – For Michigan. For You." slogan can be found at www.malph.org.

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