

For Immediate Release:
February 14, 2017

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Take Steps to Stay Healthy

It is that time of the year where it is common to see illness like the influenza and norovirus. These illnesses are unpredictable- even healthy people can become seriously ill. Now is the time to make your health a priority. Public health professionals across Michigan continue to recommend steps you can take to prevent illness.

One of the most important steps a person can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others is keeping their hands clean. Adults and children should wash their hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing. Remember to use warm water, scrub for at least 20 seconds, rinse, and dry using paper towel or air dryer.

In addition, there are several other good health habits to practice now that can help your body stay healthy and fight off the flu and other illness:

- Get a flu shot. It is not too late!
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too; stay home from work or school.
- Disinfect common surface areas with chlorine bleach-based cleaners or an EPA registered disinfectant.
- 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.

Influenza, commonly known as the flu is spread person to person usually when a person coughs, talks, or sneezes. Flu symptoms include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, and or fatigue.

Norovirus, commonly known as the stomach flu is spread by person to person, contaminated food or water, or contaminated surfaces. Norovirus symptoms include diarrhea, throwing up, nausea, and or stomach pain.

If you have been ill with a gastro-intestinal illness like norovirus and work in a nursing home, take care of patients, work in childcare, or handle food, you should not return to work for at least 2 days (48 hours) after all your symptoms go away. Also, avoid cooking for others, caring for others especially the young or elderly, going to work, and attending group functions until 2 days after the symptoms of your illness have gone away.

The mission of District Health Department #10 is to promote and enhance the health of our communities and environment through protection, prevention, and intervention. Serving Crawford, Lake, Mason, Missaukee, Oceana, Kalkaska, Manistee, Mecosta, Newaygo, and Wexford Counties.

For more information visit: www.cdc.gov/flu or www.cdc.gov/norovirus. To get a flu shot, make an appointment today at your local District Health Department #10 office- call (888)217-3904, press option #2 or visit www.dhd10.org.

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