



Watch Your **SNEEZE** Please!



The City of Racine Health Department wants you to stay healthy and well this season. Here are some things you should know about halting the spread of germs that cause colds and influenza.

The sneeze that sneaks up on you...the cough you can't stop... both spread germs to others.



Let's Follow the Germ Trail

Your nose wrinkles, your breath catches, and you can't stop it...the dreaded sneeze. Trying to be polite, you quickly raise your hands.

ACHOO!

Now you've got the sneeze in your hands. Or maybe it is a cough that you can't stop, and you cover your mouth with your hand, just like Mom taught you.

Then you open a doorknob or touch a pen or a keyboard or a table. Since viruses and bacteria can live for hours on these surfaces, the next person who touches these items now has the germs. A quick touch to the eyes, nose, or mouth allows the germs into the body. That's how colds and flus can be spread.

Your cough or sneeze can broadcast germs more than three feet into the air around you! If you are in an elevator, at a lunch table, or on a plane, others who breathe in these germs can catch your cold or flu. That's how colds spread quickly through schools and workplaces, and how the flu can spread through entire cities!



**Use Sleeve,
Not Hands**



SOS – Sneeze on Your Sleeve

The best way to catch your sneeze or cough is in a tissue; then throw it away and wash your hands with soap, or use hand sanitizer. But sneezes are sneaky, and coughs are cagey, and we don't always have a tissue handy. You need a cover, but not your hands! Instead, turn to your sleeve. Muffle your mouth with your sleeve, and the germs will die in the fabric. It's polite, quiet, and always handy. What a perfectly simple solution to a complex health problem!

No germs will be spread, and the people around you will be grateful of your consideration. Fewer people will have colds and flu. More children will stay in school, and adults will be able to go to work. We'll reduce workplace losses, lower medical bills, and generally, be a lot healthier and happier.

So, this flu season. . .

Watch Your Sneeze, Please!

OR Use Tissue



What is the impact of these illnesses in our schools, workplaces, and homes?

- In U.S. schools, nearly 22 million days¹ are lost every year just to colds.
- In workplaces, the flu is responsible for 75 million days of absenteeism...for a total loss of more than \$16.3 billion dollars each year².
- When people come to work sick with respiratory illness, the result is 200 million days of diminished productivity³, totaling \$38 billion a year⁴.

Did you know that the flu may affect one out of five of us this winter?

- Each episode of illness translates into five to six days of symptoms and between a half day and five days of work missed⁵.
- Each year, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications, and 36,000 people die⁶.

1-CDC. (1996)

2-National Business Group on Health

3-National Business Group on Health

4-Center for Law and Social Policy – interpretation. (2005)

5-National Business Group on Health

6-National Business Group on Health

Wash/Sanitize Hands



Clean Hands

When should you wash your hands?

Always before eating, and after being in public at school or work or stores.

How to wash your hands

Rub your hands with soap and warm water – long enough to sing “Happy Birthday” twice, and rinse. Dry with a clean towel or hot air dryer.

Sanitizing

If you can’t wash your hands, use hand sanitizer. Keep a pump bottle on your desk or countertop, and carry a small bottle in your pocket, purse, or auto. Keeping your hands clean will reduce the amount of germs you get and give!

And remember, don’t touch your nose, eyes, or mouth. Use a tissue or clean hands!

Flu Prevention

The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year. Contact the City of Racine Health Department, your employer’s Human Resources Department, or your Health Care Provider for more information.



The City of Racine Health Department wants you to stay healthy and well at work, school, and in your home. Please share this information with your co-workers, friends, and family. If you need further information, please see:

www.cityofracine.org.



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