

## Avoiding colds and flu

### The best prevention tactics are the simplest

Many of the best tactics for avoiding colds and flu are very simple and easy to do, but also very easy to forget. But with a little diligence, you can coast through the cold and flu season without finding yourself ill or bedridden.

One of the most basic preventative methods is the flu shot. Medical professionals insist that it is the single best way to prevent the flu.<sup>1</sup>

Vigorous, frequent hand washing with soap and water is another great way to avoid the viruses that cause colds and flu. The rule of thumb is to scrub hard for at least 20 seconds, using the "happy birthday" song to judge the amount of time needed to thoroughly clean your hands, fingers, and nails. Although it may sound silly, just think about how quickly we all rush through washing our hands.

Using alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be a good alternative for when you can't get to soap and water, because it can kill the germs that cause colds and flu.

Other important, easy ways to stay healthy this flu season include:

- Avoid getting close to people who are sick
- Keep your own hands away from your face
- Avoid shaking hands, when possible
- Keep your work area and general surroundings clean
- Get enough rest and exercise
- Drink plenty of water and other healthy fluids

Cold and flu season can be a miserable time if you get sick. But by paying attention to the sources of the viruses that cause illness, you can take practical steps to avoid infection.

As you think about your general health and wellness, it's always helpful to talk to your doctor about any concerns or questions you may have about avoiding viruses and staying strong and healthy this flu season. And when you feel you need an informed, thorough second opinion, your Best Doctors benefit gives you the option of a detailed, expert review of your case.

<sup>1</sup><https://symptoms.webmd.com/cold-flu-map/avoid-cold-flu>

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