



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COVER YOUR COUGH THIS HOLIDAY SEASON – AND YEAR ‘ROUND *Washing Hands, Staying Home When Ill Can Help Prevent Spread of Disease*

This holiday season, the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) encourages the public to take steps to prevent the spread of flu and other infectious respiratory illnesses.

“It’s a very good practice to always cover your cough,” says Nancy Bowen, M.D., San Diego County HHSA Public Health Officer. “You can take simple steps to help reduce your chances of getting the flu or a cold and help protect those around you as well.”

The steps include:

- The best way to protect yourself from the flu (but not colds) is to get a flu shot every year.
- Cover Your Cough by using a tissue or shirt sleeve if a tissue is not available. Tiny droplets expelled during coughing and sneezing can infect others.
- Frequent hand washing also can prevent the spread of colds and flu. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with plenty of soap and warm water. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based gel or wipes.
- Avoid touching the mouth, nose and eyes.
- If you’re sick with a cold or the flu, stay home. Avoid close contact with those who are sick. The flu typically lasts a week to 10 days.

It’s not too late to get a flu shot, as flu season typically lasts through March. For recorded information about flu shots and clinic locations, please call the County Flu Information Line at 1-866-358-2966, or the Aging and Independence Services/Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) Flu Hotline at 1-877-358-0202 to talk to an Information Specialist about flu shots.

General information about the flu and flu shots is available at the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Immunization Information Hotline at 1-800-232-4636 (English and Spanish).

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