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## Stop viruses from spreading

### 9 ways to stay well

Each year, you're up against 200 or more cold and flu viruses. Get your flu shot, and take simple, effective steps to help protect yourself and others.

#### Healthy habits

- **Keep 'em clean.** Hand washing is one of the most important things you can do to keep from getting and spreading colds and the flu. Using plain soap and warm water is as effective as using antibacterial soap. Carry an alcohol-based hand gel to use when you can't wash.
- **Stay healthy.** Eating well (including antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables), getting plenty of rest, managing stress, and exercising can help you resist infection. Children and adults (especially seniors 65 or older) who have a chronic health condition or weakened immune system should get a pneumonia vaccination.
- **Kick the habit.** If you smoke, we have a variety of resources to help you quit. Keep your children away from secondhand smoke. It's bad for their health and can cause cold-like symptoms.
- **Breastfeed your baby.** This will help keep your baby healthy and reduce the risk of colds and ear infections.

#### No pass zone

- **Cover your cough.** Cold and flu viruses are spread through the air. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve to trap the virus. If you cough into your hands, wash them as soon as you can.
- **Clean your home.** A sick person can spread germs by touching counter tops, telephones, toys, cups, or bathroom sinks. Find out how to keep a cold- and flu-free kitchen.
- **Use disposable tissues.** Viruses can live on cloth handkerchiefs, so use — and throw away immediately — disposable tissues to reduce spreading your illness to others.
- **Avoid touching your face.** Try not to rub your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs often spread this way.
- **Try not to pass it on.** Stay home and rest when you're sick. Really need to go out? Be careful not to expose others. If you have a fever, wait at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.

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Additional Kaiser Permanente reviewers

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