

# Practice Good Hygiene

## *to Prevent the Spread of Flu*

You and your family members can prevent the spread of flu and other infectious diseases by following these guidelines:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 15 seconds, briskly rubbing hands together. Make sure you wash under fingernails and under rings. While caring for someone who has the flu, wash your hands frequently, especially before you eat or drink anything. Washing is best; use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer only when soap and water are not available.
- Keep hands away from mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Wear disposable gloves and an N-95 mask or surgical mask when ill or when caring for ill persons.
- Wash dishes, cups, and flatware with hot water (130 degrees F) and/or dry on "hot" setting in dishwasher.
- Do not share towels, washcloths, and bedding with ill persons.
- Place gloves, tissues, and other waste into a plastic bag and then put the bag into another plastic-lined container for disposal (double-bag).

### **Coughing and Sneezing Etiquette**

Cough and sneeze into the sleeve on your upper arm or shoulder. This prevents disease-carrying droplets from contaminating surfaces and the air, thus preventing the spread of the virus to other people.

Use a disposable tissue rather than a handkerchief when sneezing; then wash hands with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Promptly and properly dispose of used tissues.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

When the flu virus is present, disinfection provides an extra margin of safety. Given the right conditions, the flu virus can live on surfaces for hours.

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Disinfect areas frequently where there are both high concentrations of germs and a possibility that they will be spread to others, such as in kitchens and bathrooms. A disinfectant label should clearly show its uses and have an EPA registration number. Diluted bleach is an excellent disinfectant. Diapering surfaces, toilets, and sinks can be safely disinfected with a solution of one-quarter cup of chlorine bleach mixed with 1 quart of water. A weaker solution of one-quarter teaspoon of bleach in 1 quart of water may be used to disinfect other hard surfaces, such as tabletops, doorknobs, and countertops.

**Be Prepared.**

**Make a Plan.**

**Keep Informed.**

**Spread the Word about the Flu—Don't Spread the Flu!**

Contact your county Extension agent for more information about preventing and preparing for the flu and caring for those who have the flu. Or visit the Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) Web site at <http://texashelp.tamu.edu>.



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