



# Health Hints

## Combat Cold And Flu During Sniffle-Sneeze Season

(NAPSA)—Most households will be hit by at least one bout of respiratory illness in the coming months; in fact, the average child gets six to 10 colds per year and the average adult has two to four. There are many easy and affordable ways to keep your family healthy. Staying ahead of colds and the flu takes a little knowledge and a lot of common sense, say healthcare experts at Target, who offer the following tips for staying healthy this season:

### Cold or Flu:

#### What's the Difference?

The common cold and influenza are both respiratory illnesses, but they differ in severity and are caused by different types of viruses.

“Flu is usually more severe and marked by fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, muscle aches and a dry cough, whereas cold symptoms are generally milder and include a runny or stuffy nose, a sore throat, and sneezing or coughing,” says Target Medical Director Dr. Joshua Riff. “While colds generally do not result in serious health problems, influenza can sometimes lead to pneumonia and require hospitalization.”

Colds and the flu both spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes, expelling tiny respiratory droplets containing the virus. Direct contact with the person isn't even necessary since droplets can live for hours on tables, door-knobs and other surfaces. You can get sick just by touching the contaminated surface and then touching your face.

### Avoid and Prevent

While there is no surefire way



**Colds and flu are nothing to sneeze at. It pays to be prepared.**

to prevent all respiratory illnesses, there are some common-sense practices that reduce your risk.

First, get vaccinated. It's the single best way to stay healthy and protect your loved ones, especially the very young and the elderly. While there is not yet a vaccine against the common cold, a flu shot will significantly reduce the risk of contracting the flu. This year, more than 1,600 Target Pharmacy and 36 Target Clinic locations across the country are offering a vaccine for just \$24 that protects against both the seasonal flu and H1N1.

Second, disinfect hands and surroundings. Next to getting a flu shot, the best way to avoid the flu is to wash hands often with warm, soapy water. Dr. Riff endorses the tip of singing “Happy Birthday” twice to be sure you are washing for at least 15 to 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers are also effective. Use a disinfecting wipe to clean doorknobs, tables and other items that can become contaminated.

Finally, practice healthy habits

that boost and protect your immune system. Get a good night's sleep and exercise regularly. And don't underestimate the power of fresh fruit and juices rich in vitamin C, such as tangerine, orange, pineapple and strawberry.

### Know How to Treat

Despite all the precautions, you might still get sick. If you do come down with a cold or the flu, stay home and rest. Going to work or school is not only hard on you, it will make others sick, too. There are no medicines that will speed the course of a cold, but there are many things you should have on hand to relieve symptoms and help you rest.

Stock up on the following items and you will be well prepared for cold and flu season:

- A pain reliever like ibuprofen or acetaminophen will reduce fever and relieve body aches and headaches. Save by purchasing private-label brands such as up & up from Target (\$3.34 for 100-count ibuprofen)—the quality is the same as that of national retail brands, which retail for \$7.99-\$8.99.

- Saline nasal spray and a nasal decongestant will reduce congestion.

- Cough drops will relieve a scratchy throat.

- A cool-mist humidifier or vaporizer will help to relieve coughing.

Target is the one-stop shop for all your cold and flu season needs—from flu shots and medicine cabinet must-haves to nutritious fresh produce and soothing comfort foods. Visit a nearby store or [www.Target.com/flu](http://www.Target.com/flu).