



spotlight on health

Protecting Your Family From Illness-Causing Germs

(NAPSA)—Given the recent H1N1 influenza global pandemic, it's more important than ever that Americans make hygiene a priority for their families. However, according to a new international study, American hygiene habits are getting worse and kitchen surfaces continue to harbor bacteria, including those that could sicken families.

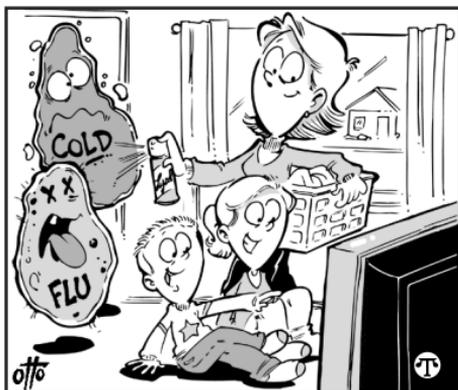
Results from a recent Hygiene Council study showed that the area where families spend the most time—the kitchen—is also where the most potential illness-causing germs are lurking.

In fact, 60 percent of kitchen sink faucets analyzed in the U.S. failed the hygiene test for having unsatisfactory or heavily contaminated levels of bacteria. Also, the dirtiest item in the house remains the kitchen sponge, with 70 percent of American kitchen sponges failing the hygiene test.

To help stop the spread of these potentially harmful germs for a healthy family, Hygiene Council member and pediatrician Dr. Laura Jana recommends that families follow these simple routines:

- **Get Vaccinated**—Understand the difference between and availability of the seasonal flu and H1N1 (swine) vaccines and talk to your doctor about what's best for your family.

- **Wash Hands Often and Properly**—The Centers for Disease Control says hand washing is the most effective way to help stay healthy. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, ensuring that all surfaces of the hands are cleaned. Once washed, dry your hands thoroughly with a clean, dry towel. If soap and water are unavailable, use a hand sanitizer. In between hand



You can help protect your family from cold and flu viruses.

washings, practice good cough and sneeze etiquette to prevent spreading germs to others by coughing into your elbow, rather than your hands.

- **Disinfect to Protect**—Help prevent the spread of illness-causing germs by disinfecting the surfaces that your family frequently touches. Use a trusted disinfectant, such as Lysol Disinfectant Spray, which is proven to kill cold and flu viruses, including H1N1.

- **Stay Home if You Are Sick**—If you or a family member feels unwell with flulike symptoms (such as fever, fatigue and sore throat), stay home and rest. You will get over the illness faster and will not infect those around you. Plan ahead for backup child care options if a parent is sick or unable to be home with the child.

“In the course of their hectic daily lives, it's easy for parents to overlook all the common places where their young children can come into contact with germs, but these simple, low-cost activities can be quite effective in keeping families healthy,” says Dr. Jana.

For more tips on how to help protect your family from germs at home, visit www.hygienecouncil.com or www.cdc.gov/ounceofprevention.