

PREVENTING COLDS AND INFLUENZA (FLU)

Cold and influenza season is here. As the weather gets cooler and we move indoors, so do germs. Children need reminders to decrease the risk of colds and flu in your house by:

- ♦ Washing hands often
- ♦ Coughing and sneezing into their elbow
- ♦ Not sharing facecloths or towels
- ♦ Keeping hands away from nose and mouth
- ♦ Not sharing food or drink with others

To help limit the spread of germs, please keep your child at home if he or she is feverish, coughing a lot, has a thick yellow or green discharge from the nose, or is otherwise obviously unwell.

Viruses cause colds and influenza. The most effective treatment for a cold is rest and fluids. The influenza vaccine will protect against specific types of influenza. Antibiotics will not make a cold or other virus go away faster. However, more serious infections can start out as a cold. Call your doctor if your child has an earache, fever higher than 39° C (102° F), rash, is very sleepy, very cranky or fussy, has trouble breathing or a cough that will not go away.

Handwashing is the most effective way to stop the spread of germs that cause colds, influenza, diarrhea, and other illnesses. To wash hands properly:

- ♦ **Wet** hands under warm running water
- ♦ **Scrub** with plain soap for a count of **20**, all over hands and between fingers
- ♦ **Rinse** under running water for a count of **10**
- ♦ **Dry** hands with a clean paper towel
- ♦ **Turn** off taps with a paper towel

Remember to wash hands:

- ♦ Before and after eating or handling food
- ♦ After using the toilet, handling pets, coughing, sneezing, or wiping noses

For more information contact:

- ♦ Your local Health Unit
- ♦ HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 (a free call) or www.healthlinkbc.ca
- ♦ Your doctor

Health Units:

Esquimalt	250-519-5311	Salt Spring Island	250-538-4880
Outer Gulf Islands	250-539-3099	Sooke	250-642-5464
Peninsula	250-544-2400	Victoria	250-388-2200
Saanich	250-519-5100	West Shore	250-519-3490