



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

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Share the joy, not illness, this holiday season

As family and friends gather, DHS encourages flu vaccines for everyone, and offers other tips to avoid spreading illnesses

MADISON—As we look forward to gathering with family and friends for the holidays, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) encourages everyone to take steps to ensure the holidays are remembered for the joy they bring, not for the illnesses shared.

“The first thing we recommend is to get a flu shot,” said Karen McKeown, State Health Officer. “This year’s vaccine appears to be a good match against the influenza strains we can expect this fall and winter.” The vaccine is safe and effective for everyone 6 months old and older, and protects against serious illness – especially important if holiday gatherings include babies, people over 65 years old, pregnant women, or people with compromised immune systems.

McKeown adds that people traveling over the holidays also need to take precautions to avoid getting and spreading illnesses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has [tips](#) to help you determine which vaccines may be necessary for specific destinations. In addition, some adults may not have received required vaccines as children, or may need a booster shot. Check the [Wisconsin Immunization Registry](#) to view your immunization records.

In addition to vaccinations, there are other simple steps we all can take to avoid illness:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your upper sleeve, and try to avoid touching your face with your hand. If you use a tissue, throw it away after one use.
- Use your own drinking cups and straws.
- Avoid being exposed to people who are sick with flu-like symptoms.
- Eat nutritious meals, get plenty of rest and do not smoke.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, refrigerator handle, telephone, faucets).
- If you’re sick, stay home, get rest, drink plenty of liquids and avoid using alcohol and tobacco.

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