



October 14th, 2012

Flu Season!

It's that special time of year again... flu season! Influenza virus is spread via tiny droplets in the air from the coughs or sneezes of an infected person. These invisible droplets can be inhaled, land on you or on surfaces you touch – so defend yourself with frequent hand washing. Also good protection – stimulate your immune system with vaccination. The flu shot can reduce your risk of flu by up to 80%.

Wash your hands

Many of us don't make a concerted effort to wash our hands effectively – but thorough hand washing is key to reducing the spread of many illnesses (not just the flu). But, just what is "effective?" Wet your hands and wrists. Lather with soap on all surfaces – backs of hands, knuckles, between fingers and under nails – for at least 15 seconds. Rinse thoroughly and dry with disposable paper towels. Now, that's clean!

Read the labels

You just want to breathe - but those pharmacy shelves are cluttered with colourful boxes all claiming to be best! For simple nasal stuffiness due to colds, a decongestant is often the recommended medication. Watch out for multi-ingredient packages that can lead to overdosing or treating symptoms that aren't there. Talk to your pharmacist about interactions with other medications or conditions. In this case, the K.I.S.S. principle often holds true!

Tried and true cold and flu customs

It is difficult to watch your child suffer with a cold and not have a lot of medication options. Time to get back to basics: chicken soup is a worthwhile standby. Sore throats respond to honey/lemon & warm water or frozen dairy treats. Feed a fever with plenty of fluids. Congestion can be alleviated with a vaporizer/humidifier or saline nasal spray & aspirator. And mentholated ointment can just feel good.

Our pharmacists have many tips for managing the uncomfortable symptoms of colds and flus - and most of them are just as good for adults as they are for kids!