

11-13-0-9 H1N1 Sidebar- Prevention Methods

Ways to prevent viruses from finding a foothold in your life:

You probably know about the importance of hand washing and surface sanitizing but did you know the following?

- ❖ The influenza virus like the cold outdoor temperatures and it likes dry air and dry mucous membranes.
 - Humidify the air with simmering water or a humidifier.
 - Dry mucous membranes are like chapped hands. They allow the germs to get a foothold in the dry membrane surface. Moisten the mucous membranes with saline spray and then blow the germs out by blowing the nose. Do this at least morning and night. For children, who don't appreciate stuff being squirted up their nose, try spraying the saline solution on a twirled tissue and just quickly dab it in the nostril and repeat with another tissue for the other nostril. If you can get them to blow their nose after that: good, but remember to wash the hands right away.
 - Do the same for your throat by gargling a very mild saltwater solution. Gargling and frequent drinking of fluids hydrates the body, moistens the throat and a good spitting into the sink sends germs in the direction we want: Out.
- ❖ When the flu does hit your household, practice isolation and quarantine as much as possible. Isolate the ill and quarantine the exposed away from others.
 - The use of a mask may be warranted with face-to-face contact with the sick, especially if they are coughing, for times such as taking the temperature. A bandana can be used, untied from the rear, dropped into the hamper and hands washed after that.
- ❖ Influenza is spread mainly by hand contamination and heavy droplets in the air. Heavy droplets spray out several feet and then sink to the floor and other surfaces. This is why the "cough etiquette" of coughing/sneezing into the sleeve is so important for capturing the virus and why the "social distancing" of staying at least an arm length's away is so useful for preventing the spread of germs and avoiding the need of masks. Masks, like gloves, can easily create a false sense of security and so easily become contaminated.