



# News Release

Memphis and Shelby County Health Department  
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## Public Health Practices Important for Prevention of Influenza

MEMPHIS, TN - Now with the influenza season upon us, and the shortage of influenza vaccine in our community, the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department's Epidemiology Section wants to remind everyone that respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette and handwashing play a major role in preventing the spread of germs.

All people with respiratory symptoms should practice good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

These consist of the following:

- Cover the nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, preferably using a disposable tissue.
- Use tissues to contain mucus, saliva and nasal drip (respiratory secretions); dispose of them after use.
- Wash hands (with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand gel) after coming in contact with respiratory secretions or contaminated objects.
- Keep your hands away from face (especially mouth and eyes).

For all individuals, handwashing is an essential part of preventing illness, including influenza. It is especially important to wash your hands:

- before, during, and after you prepare food,
- before you eat,
- after you use the bathroom,
- after diapering or assisting with toileting,
- after handling animals or animal waste,
- when your hands are dirty, and
- more frequently when someone in your home or work environment is sick.

What is the correct way to wash your hands?

- Wash all surfaces, including: backs of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails for a **minimum of 20 SECONDS with warm soapy running water.**
- Rinse well and dry hands on a clean towel, paper towel or in a public restroom use air dryer.

For more information about decreasing the spread of disease and illness, contact the Epidemiology Section of the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department, during normal business hours, at (901) 544-7717.