

## 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
- ♦ Covering coughs and sneezes
- ♦ Coughing into the elbow
- ♦ Not sharing facecloths or towels
- ♦ Keeping hands away from nose and mouth
- ♦ Not sharing food, drink, suckers, etc., with someone who is sick

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. The most effective treatment for a cold is rest and fluids. 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 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 soap for a count of **15**, all over hands and between fingers
- ♦ **Rinse** under running water for a count of **5**
- ♦ **Dry** hands with a clean paper towel
- ♦ **Turn** off taps with a paper towel

Remember to wash hands:

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

For more information contact:

- ♦ Your local Health Unit
- ♦ BC Nurse Line (1-866-215-4700) a free call
- ♦ BC Health Files [www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm](http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm)
- ♦ Your doctor

### Health Units:

Esquimalt	360-5600	Salt Spring Island	538-4880
Outer Gulf Islands	539-3099	Sooke	642-5464
Peninsula	544-2400	Victoria	388-2200
Saanich	744-5100	West Shore	478-1757