Beat the Bug

March 17, 2014 By Kate Ferguson

During flu season, it may seem as if you're surrounded by the enemy: people coughing, blowing their noses or otherwise spreading the contagion. Vaccinations remain the best defense, but these other common-sense precautions can also help.

Lather up often and well.
Wash your hands with soap and water, or rub on an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Don't spread germs.
This means don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth and then handle any objects without first observing the previous suggestion. What's more, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue—not your hands, please—when you cough or sneeze. Then toss that tissue!

Stay away from sick people.
Avoid close contact with people sneezing, coughing or showing other signs of illness.

Maintain good health.
This means get enough sleep and exercise, keep stress levels down, drink plenty of fluids, and eat healthy.

Stay home if you're sick.
Avoid going out for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone and you haven't been using fever-reducing drugs.

Consider taking antiviral drugs.
This applies only if you're not sick but have been exposed to someone with the flu. First, talk with your doctor about whether antiviral drugs, such as Tamiflu and Relenza, are appropriate for you. These medicines can prevent you from getting sick, especially if they're used early.

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