Different viruses may cause the common cold and the flu, but you can take action to help reduce your risk of catching either of them. Follow these simple prevention tips:

**Wash your hands often**
- Scrub for **20 seconds** with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Dry hands with a **paper towel** instead of a shared towel

**Don’t touch your eyes, nose, and mouth**
- Viruses can live on **unwashed hands**
- These are places viruses can **enter your body**

**Stay away from people who are sick**
- Viruses can spread through **close contact** with others
- Avoid sharing **food, utensils, or cups**

**Disinfect surfaces that are often touched**
- Such as **sink handles** and **doorknobs**
- Not just at home – think about **work** and **school**, too

**Talk with your healthcare provider about getting a flu vaccine**
- There is **no vaccine** to protect you from the common cold

If you do end up catching a cold or the flu, **you can infect others anywhere from 1 day before noticing symptoms and up to 7 days after symptoms start!**

Be sure to:

- **Stay at home when you are sick**
  - Plus at least 24 hours after your fever is gone

- **Do not come in close contact with others**
  - This includes shaking hands and hugging

- **Cough and sneeze into your elbow or a tissue**
  - Be sure to throw the used tissue in the trash

- **Continue to wash your hands often**
  - Especially after nose-wiping

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