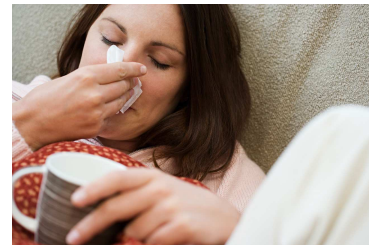




# Wellness Buddy Wednesday Tip

## *Is It a Cold or Is It Flu?*

Everybody gets watery eyes, a runny nose, and a scratchy throat from time to time. When this happens the most important step is to decide what you have so you can seek an effective treatment. Sometimes what may feel like the beginning of a cold may turn out to be something worse!



Influenza, or flu, is almost always caused by a virus. As a result, antibiotics won't provide relief. Flu usually spreads in the spring or fall of the year. Flu symptoms develop one or two days after exposure to the virus. Early symptoms may be identical to those of a cold: possible fever and chills, runny nose and sneezing, and nasal congestion. But unlike a cold, flu also brings sudden muscle weakness and aches and pains in the arms, legs, and back. A dry, hacking cough, which produces no mucus, but may cause chest pain, may be another symptom of the flu.

Flu shots taken in the fall can provide immunity to some flu strains. Nevertheless, flu shots go out of date each year as new strains of virus develop.

Colds can be either bacterial or viral. Symptoms characteristic of colds are a sore throat; watery eyes; hoarseness; and a thick, greenish, yellow nasal discharge. Some individuals believe that exposure to drafts or having wet feet is a sure way to "catch a cold." In reality, this is not true. Exposure to viruses brings on colds!

Sometimes a cold or flu turns dangerous. You should see a health care pro-

vider if any of the following occur:

- A cold or the flu that is accompanied by headache or facial pain (indicating sinus infection).
- A deep, “honking” cough; wheezing; or shortness of breath (indicating bronchitis or pneumonia)
- High fever (above 104 degrees)
- Pain in the ears

## How Well Do You Protect Yourself against Infectious Diseases?

*A no answer to any of the following questions indicates a way to improve defenses against infection.*

1. Do you keep your environment cool, clean, dry and well lit?
2. Do you wash your hands several times during the day and before mealtimes?
3. Do you avoid sharing food, beverages, utensils, towels, and other objects with people who have symptoms of contagious infections such as colds, cold sores, (fever blisters), flu, or others?
4. Do you, whenever possible, place yourself at a distance from people who are coughing or sneezing into the air?
5. Is your diet balanced and adequate—the kind of diet your immune system needs?
6. Are you including exercise in your daily routine?
7. Do you make time for rest and fun?
8. Is stress under control in your life?
9. Do you abstain from using tobacco?
10. If you do get sick, do you follow the full course of treatment to prevent a relapse?

**“Thought on Health”** *Sickness is felt, but health not at all. — Proverb*

Healthy Communities, Healthy People Program  
Jackson County Health Department  
P O Box 310  
3045 4th Street  
Marianna, FL 32447

Mary Beth Gurganus, LD/N  
Phone: 850.526.2412 ext 282  
Fax: 850.428.9564  
Email: WellnessBuddy@doh.state.fl.us



*Providing guidance and support to make the "healthy choice the easy choice!"*