

CONTAGIOUS ILLNESSES

Earlier this year, Pack Scouters noticed a Cub Scout was feeling unwell. The Cub had a fever, a sore throat, and a red rash on the hands and feet—all symptoms of **hand-foot-and-mouth disease**. The Scouters acted quickly and made just the right choice: they arranged for the Cub's parents to promptly come take them home.

This decision was best not only for the Cub, but for all of the other Cubs and Scouters, since hand-foot-and-mouth disease can be easily spread through contaminated surfaces and personal contact.

It's important that Scouters recognize illnesses at Scouting events and act quickly to keep as many people healthy as possible. Scouting's not much fun if getting sick is part of the deal!

Stopping the Spread

As the days grow shorter and temperatures drop, Canadians spend more and more time in close quarters. This means that we need to take a few extra precautions to avoid catching a viral illness or infection.

Avoiding illnesses isn't always possible, but diligence can help reduce the likelihood of getting sick. Here are some simple measures Sections can take to stay healthy:

If unwell, stay home.

Parents should be encouraged to keep youth with colds, flus or other illnesses home from meetings and other Scouting events. Scouters should also follow this policy themselves (while maintaining ratio).



Cough like a vampire.

When you need to cough or sneeze, do it into your elbow. To teach youth how to do this, tell them to cough like a vampire—just like Dracula drawing his cape across his face!

Wash hands frequently—and thoroughly!

Hands should be washed thoroughly before and after meetings and other Scouting events. It's especially important that everyone wash their hands after using the toilet, and before eating.

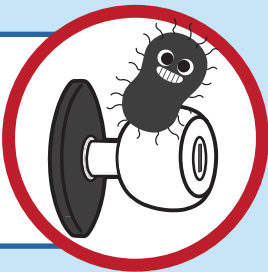


Respect personal space.

Direct or close contact with someone who's sick is the easiest way to get sick yourself. During cold and flu season, share activities that involve little direct contact, especially if a bug is already going around in your community.

Get a little tense about surfaces.

Viruses can spread through surfaces. Try not to directly touch objects and surfaces that are likely sources of infection—like doorknobs, water taps and elevator buttons. Use a paper towel to turn off a tap and open the door after using a public washroom.



Get a flu shot.

The flu shot is your best defence against the flu, and it protects both you and others who are close to you—including people whose lives may be threatened by the flu, like young children and the elderly.

Find out where you can get the flu vaccine.

What to Watch For

There are quite a number of contagious illnesses that can be easily spread at a Scout meeting, camp or event, including:

Colds—Symptoms: runny nose, sneezing, coughing, red eyes, sore throat, body aches, headaches

Strep Throat—Symptoms: sore throat, fever, swollen tonsils and lymph nodes, white or yellow spots on the back of a bright red throat

Pink Eye—Symptoms: redness in the white of the eye, swelling of the eyelids, itchy eyes, tearing

Flu—Symptoms: fever, body aches, headache, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue

Whooping Cough—Symptoms: severe fits of dry coughing, runny nose, watery eyes, fever

Fifth Disease—Symptoms: red rash on the face, fever, cough, runny nose, spotty rash on torso and limbs, joint pain

Chicken Pox—Symptoms: itchy red spots and blisters, fever, fatigue, body aches, headaches

If youth are showing any of these symptoms, act quickly to keep others healthy. Contact the youth's parents and make arrangements for them to go home and rest.