

# Health Hints

## Avoiding The Cold And Flu

(NAPSA)—When it comes to colds, the old adage usually holds true: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. And there is little that can prevent the common cold virus from infecting you if you have been exposed to it.

If you do catch a cold, however, there are ways to make things a little easier on yourself. The first step is to do yourself, your friends and co-workers a favor and stay home. That way, you won't spread your illness and you'll have the opportunity to get plenty of rest.

Also, keep in mind that while there is no cure for the cold, several studies have shown that zinc lozenge products such as COLD-EEZE could help reduce the duration of a cold by nearly half.

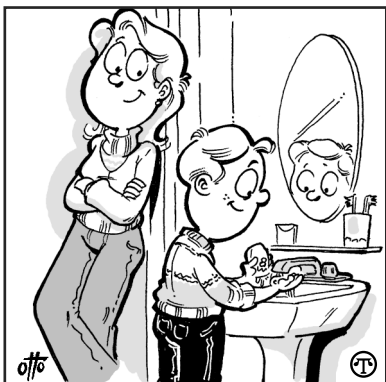
Cold treatments can vary widely. Another brand is a combination of vitamins, herbs, minerals and amino acids, but because of questions regarding its effectiveness, the company that makes it no longer claims the product has any clinical effect. In addition, there are concerns about the possibility of kidney stones because of the megadoses of vitamin C one would take in if that product were used per instructions.

Still, your best bet is to not catch a cold in the first place. Try these tips:

- Wash your hands frequently. This is often your best defense. Wash the entire hand using warm water and soap. Don't forget to clean under your fingernails.

- Avoid putting your hands near your eyes, nose or mouth, unless you have washed. Most bacteria and germs are spread from a surface to your hands to your face.

- Cover your cough. Covering your mouth when you cough prevents the airborne spread of



**Washing hands frequently is a great defense against the common cold.**

viruses and bacteria.

- Clean your "shared spaces" often. Remember phones, keyboards, steering wheels, office equipment and other items typically used by several people during the day.

- Get a flu shot. Flu shots are especially beneficial for those with weakened immune systems, the elderly or those who come in contact with a lot of people. Plus, the vaccine has been shown to shorten the duration of viral illnesses that are not flu.

- Get enough sleep. During sleep, your body's immune system goes into high gear to protect you from illness. Lack of sleep can reduce immune functioning, making you susceptible to sickness.

- It's sometimes easy to overlook your thirst and get dehydrated. Make sure you consume eight glasses of water a day. But don't reuse or share water bottles.

- Keep a moderate exercise schedule. Try to maintain a three-to-four-day-a-week exercise routine.

- Eat a healthy diet. A well-balanced diet helps maintain a healthy immune system.