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NEWS RELEASE

Sneeze into Your Sleeve, Please!

You may see more people sneezing and coughing into their sleeve or the bend of their arms rather than their hands when they don't have a tissue. It may look strange at first, but health professionals are currently educating the general public to sneeze and cough in a new way that doesn't spread cold and flu germs.

"Sneezing and coughing into your sleeve is actually the best way to stop the spread of germs from a sneeze or cough when you don't have a tissue," as per the Otsego County Department of Health



Many adults grew up being taught to sneeze and cough into their hands when they didn't have a tissue. "Of course, covering our mouths kept the germs from spreading into the air - - but not by our hands. That's why the Otsego County Department of Health reminds adults to sneeze and cough into the bend of their elbow, not their hands, when a tissue isn't handy. Many children today are already doing that, and we need adults to learn this new way of sneezing and coughing too.

It's important for all of us to practice what is being called "respiratory etiquette." It's a courteous and simple way to keep our germs to ourselves.

You can help stop the spread of germs, especially during this flu and cold season. Start today by practicing respiratory etiquette:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm, not your hands.

- Put your used tissues in a wastebasket.
- Stay home if you think you have the flu, but if you must go out in public, such as to seek medical care, wear a surgical or procedure mask.

If you do happen to sneeze or cough into your hands, make sure to thoroughly wash your hands. Your hands might look clean, but they carry germs that could make you or someone else sick.

Wash your hands often with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds. Carry an alcohol-based hand rub, also called a hand sanitizer, to use when you have no soap or water handy. Choose a product with at least 60 percent alcohol.

Besides always washing your hands after sneezing or coughing or using a tissue, wash your hands after using the bathroom; after being near someone who is ill; after touching handrails, door knobs or other things handled by people; before and after eating and drinking; before and after handling food; and after handling garbage or trash.

“Practicing simple actions such as sneezing and coughing into the bend of your elbow or sleeve if you don’t have a tissue is important respiratory etiquette. The Otsego County Department of Health wants to help you and your family stay healthy during this cold and flu season.

For more information, call the Otsego County Department of Health at 607-547-4230.