



## **Fighting the Flu with your Toothbrush**

It's that time again—sneezin' season—which means that flu season is close on its heels. As we know, flu season usually starts in November and winds down in March.

Even though sneezing is not a typical flu symptom, sneezing and coughing are two major ways the virus is spread from one person to another. Did you know you can spread the flu before you even know that you have the flu? You are still contagious for 3–4 days after your symptoms appear. Flu symptoms include:

- Body aches and chills
- A dry cough
- Fever and headache
- A sore throat and a stuffy nose

### **A healthy toothbrush is a happy toothbrush!**

Yes, your toothbrush can prevent you from getting the flu....but, many germs and viruses that cause the flu can be hiding inside your brush! The list below contains suggestions for a happy, healthy toothbrush and a happy healthy you:

- Wash your hands before and after brushing your teeth, or someone else's teeth
- Set your toothbrush upright in a cup inside a bathroom cabinet (the bathroom is usually the most contaminated room in the house)
- Air dry your toothbrush
- Your toothbrush can hold onto your germs and infections. When you are ill, change your toothbrush so that you do not re-infect yourself. You can pick up the inexpensive economy packs of toothbrushes and change it daily. Once you are well you can go back to your cooler, state-of-the-art toothbrush if you wish
- Do not share your toothbrush, this will increase your risk of sharing or passing an infection to someone else
- If you share a toothbrush holder, regularly clean and disinfect the holder. Ensure the brushes cannot touch each other

For more about oral health contact your Dental Health Educator [ashley.white@pnrha.ca](mailto:ashley.white@pnrha.ca)

<http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/home/healthtopics/flu.shtml>

[http://hubpages.com/hub/Avoid\\_Cold\\_and\\_Flu](http://hubpages.com/hub/Avoid_Cold_and_Flu)

<http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/home/healthtopics/flu.shtml>