



H1N1 Flu and Holidays Parties *Tips to keep you and your guests healthy*

There's something in the air this holiday season, and we don't mean the smell of pumpkin pie. The H1N1 flu virus, also known as swine flu, has become well established in California and around the world. Flu viruses, seasonal or H1N1, are usually passed around by close contact with a sick person.

The holiday season is a time for getting together with relatives and friends. One uninvited guest you want to avoid this year is the H1N1 flu virus. You don't have to cancel your family's holiday traditions, but keep reading for some creative ideas about how to reduce the spread of illness while entertaining guests at parties.

Etiquette

- **Are you sure you're ready to party?**
 - Do not throw a party or attend a party if you have a fever, cough or other flu symptoms
 - Add a sentence to invitations asking that people with flu-like symptoms to take care of themselves by staying home to rest
- **Cover it up!**
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes into your sleeve or with a tissue
 - Model this behavior for your kids
- **Keep it clean!**
 - Make sure your bathroom has plenty of soap and towels for hand washing
 - Place bottles of hand sanitizer and tissues in plain view
 - Even with clean hands, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
 - Use regular household cleaners as directed to disinfect commonly touched surfaces and objects
- **To avoid handshakes or hello hugs and kisses, consider:**
 - A friendly elbow bump instead
 - Polite words like: "Excuse me for not shaking hands, but it's great to meet you."
- **Reconsider the mistletoe!**
 - A kiss on the lips likely presents a higher risk than cheek kissing
 - However both involve close, personal contact which is key to passing illness

Food

- **Be careful with finger food!**
 - Avoid offering chips, candies, nuts or any food in big, open bowls that people could reach their potentially contaminated hands into
- **Consider serving individual portions of appetizers in small containers, like:**
 - Peanuts or cheese cubes on little pleated paper cups or small appetizer plates
 - Veggies and dip in little glass votive candle holders
 - Salads in tiny Chinese food-style takeout containers
 - French fries in paper snow cone cups
 - Soup served in espresso cups
 - Desserts in single-serving dishes
- **Covered food is better!**
- **Consider plating and serving food instead of laying out a buffet!**

Beverages

- **Forget the punch bowl!**
 - Dipping used cups into a communal bowl is never a great idea, flu season or no
 - Ladles lessen risk, but punch bowls still offer a large surface area for germs to land on
- **Instead consider:**
 - Narrow-necked bottles
 - Beverage dispensers with lids and side spouts
- **Help guests keep track of their drink glasses by:**
 - Writing their name on it
 - Using charms or colored bands

Remember to have fun while practicing these healthy habits every day!

Happy Holidays from Napa County!

For the latest information check the **Napa County Public Health** website at: <http://www.co.napa.ca.us/publichealth>, the **CDC website** at <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu> or call the automated **Napa County Public Health** hotline at **(707) 253-4540**.