



San Francisco Department of Public Health

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For Immediate Release

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4 easy tips to stay healthy during the winter holiday season

Health department shares ways to cherish and preserve the gift of health

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (December 18, 2019) – The ultimate combination of last minute holiday gift shopping, seasonal cold sniffles, wet weather, and busy schedules can make this the most stressful time of the year. The San Francisco Department of Public Health shares the top four tips everyone needs to stay healthy during the holidays.

“Two of the warmest gifts anyone can ask for during the coldest time of the year are family-and-friends gathering time and the gift of health,” said Dr. Tomas Aragon, Health Officer of San Francisco. “By following these tips, you and your loved ones will have one of the warmest and healthiest holidays together.”

- 1) **Wash your hands** – Wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before, during and after preparing food, before eating, after using the toilet or changing diapers, after touching garbage, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, and after touching animals or animal waste. If soap and water are not available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- 2) **Food safety** – The holidays are not considered festive unless the cooks are in the kitchen, preparing meals left and right, adding the most important ingredient: food safety! Avoid foodborne illness by making sure to include these food safety tips with your recipes for a delicious holiday meal.
 - **The kitchen:** A clean holiday-ready kitchen means that all hands, cutting boards, utensils, pans, countertops and sinks are thoroughly washed with hot water and soap.
 - **Handling ingredients:** Avoid cross contamination of raw fruits, vegetables and meat during preparation. Do not use the same cutting board without cleaning with hot water and soap before and after preparing ingredients. Refrigerate all cut, peeled or cooked fresh foods within two hours.
 - **Leftovers:** Foodborne bacteria can make you sick. Throw away all perishable foods, such as meat, poultry, eggs and casseroles, left at room temperature



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longer than two hours. Leftovers stored in the refrigerator should be consumed within 3-4 days.

- 3) **Stay up to date with your vaccinations** – You may be traveling across the street, city, Bay Area, nation or ocean to reunite with family and friends this holiday season or vice versa, they are traveling to come see you. Regardless of who is making the journey, it is important to get the recommended immunizations. Vaccinations reduce your chances of getting sick and help protect your loved ones from the risk of catching infectious diseases. For example:
 - **Influenza (Flu):** The flu is more than just a cold and can cause serious health complications. The strains of influenza change over time, so it's important to get vaccinated every year.
 - **Measles:** The measles virus is highly contagious. A person can develop measles from 7 to 21 days after being exposed to someone who is contagious with measles. That's why it's so important to make sure you and your loved ones are up to date with measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine.
- 4) **Reduce sugars** – What better way to stay healthy than eat healthy? We all know sweet treats are the hardest to resist, but consider substitutes like seasonal fruits. If you must have that double chocolate cookie freshly out of the oven, consider having a smaller serving of other carbs during the meal. Can't live without carbs? Try avoiding sugary drinks like soda.