



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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### Enjoying the Holidays, the Healthy and Happy Way

**November 19, 2018**, Dalhart, Texas – Holiday season is here, but with it often comes the flu. This year, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service recommends following these tips so you can spread holiday cheer instead of germs!

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the 2017-2018 flu season was the first season to be classified as high severity, hospitalizing 30,453 people and taking the lives of 185 children. Because the flu can come on suddenly and without warning, key symptoms to watch out for include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea or vomiting (only in rare cases)

The flu is most commonly spread through tiny droplets when people cough, sneeze or talk. People can also become infected when touching surfaces that has the flu virus on it, then touching their mouths, eyes, nose or even food. Because the virus is so easily spread, it is important to not only wash your hands, but to also get vaccinated each year, says AgriLife Extension Specialist Julie Tijerina. Last year, the flu vaccine was 40 percent effective against both A and B influenza, according to the CDC. Getting the flu vaccine helps keep you healthy and reduces the risk of flu complications that could lead to hospitalization or death.

In addition to getting vaccinated, having good health habits also help prevent contracting the illness:

1. Avoid close contact with those who are sick.
2. Stay at home when you are sick.
3. Cover your mouth and nose while sneezing or coughing.
4. Wash your hands.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

This year do your part to enjoy the holidays the healthy and happy way by getting vaccinated and being health-conscious. Don't let the flu get you down!

**Sources:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2017-2018.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits/index.htm>