

# Autumn Health and Safety Tips

Follow these tips to help you and your family stay safe and healthy this autumn!

## Keep your kids safe and healthy.

Get involved with your kids' activities at home and at school to help ensure they are safe and healthy.

## Take steps to prevent the flu.

The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year in the fall. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands often. Stay home if you get sick.

## Get smart about antibiotics.

Antibiotics can cure bacterial infections, but not viral infections. The common cold and the flu are viral infections, so avoid using antibiotics if you have one of these. Using antibiotics when they are not needed causes some bacteria to become resistant to the antibiotic, and therefore stronger and harder to kill. See your doctor or nurse to find out if your illness is bacterial or viral.

## Have a safe and healthy Halloween.

Make Halloween festivities fun, safe, and healthy for trick-or-treaters and party guests.

## Test and replace batteries.

Check or replace carbon monoxide batteries twice a year when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. Replace smoke alarm alkaline batteries at least once a year. Test alarms every month to ensure they work properly.

## Keep food safe.

Food is center stage during the holidays. Be sure to keep it safe by following basic food safety steps. Clean hands and surfaces often. Separate foods to avoid cross-contamination. Cook to proper temperatures. Chill promptly.

## Learn your family history.

National Family History Day is observed on Thanksgiving Day. Over the holiday or at another family gathering, talk about and write down the health conditions that run in your family. Learning about your family's health history can help you take steps to ensure a longer, healthier future together.

## Be prepared for cold weather.

Exposure to cold temperatures can cause serious health problems. Infants and the elderly are particularly at risk, but anyone can be affected. Know how to prevent health problems and what to do if a cold-weather emergency arises. Remember that using space heaters and fireplaces can increase the risk of household fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.

## Don't drink and drive.

Alcohol use impairs skills needed to drive a car safely. It slows reaction time and impairs judgment and coordination. Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes kill someone every 31 minutes and non-fatally injure someone every two minutes. Don't drink and drive, and don't let others drink and drive.



## Wash your hands.

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. It's best to wash your hands with soap and clean running water for 20 seconds. If that's not possible, use alcohol-based hand rubs.

For more information, visit:

[www.cdc.gov/family/autumn/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/family/autumn/index.htm)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Office of Women's Health