

Flu and Holiday Travel

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

[Karen Hunter] Hi, I'm Karen Hunter. I'm here with Dr. Phyllis Kozarsky from CDC, who's going to tell us how we can keep from getting or spreading the flu during the holidays. This is especially important if you're among the millions of people traveling for the holidays on crowded airplanes, trains, or buses. Thank you for joining me, Dr. Kozarsky.

[Dr. Kozarsky] I'm pleased to be here, Karen. The holidays are a time to celebrate with friends and family. Unfortunately, they coincide with flu season and the last thing any of us wants to do is get sick or make other people sick. Fortunately, there're some easy steps people can take to avoid getting or spreading the flu.

[Karen Hunter] Great! What can we do?

[Dr. Kozarsky] The number one way to protect yourself from the flu is by getting a flu vaccine every year. CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone six months of age and older. We have plenty of vaccine this season so there's still time to get vaccinated to be protected for the holidays.

[Karen Hunter] Get a flu vaccine—that's easy. I got my flu shot a while back and my arm was a little sore for a couple of days but that's nothing compared to being down and out with the flu during the holidays.

[Dr. Kozarsky] Another thing you can do is wash your hands a lot. Washing your hands often can help prevent the spread of many germs, not just the flu.

[Karen Hunter] And if soap and water aren't available, what about hand sanitizers?

[Dr. Kozarsky] Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers if you don't have access to soap and clean water.

[Karen Hunter] What should I do if I get sick?

[Dr. Kozarsky] If you get sick, stay home as much as possible except to get medical care, if needed. One sick relative at a family gathering can pass the flu to the rest of the family. Also, cough or sneeze into your arm or cover your mouth with a tissue. That can prevent the spread of your germs to others. Healthy people should avoid close contact with those who are sick so they don't get sick themselves.

[Karen Hunter] Okay, so let me summarize all this. The most important thing I can do to protect myself is get a flu vaccine. Also, I should practice every day, common sense, good health habits, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick, washing my hands often, and covering my

mouth when I cough or sneeze. And finally, I shouldn't travel if I'm sick to avoid making others sick.

[Dr. Kozarsky] That's right. By following these simple steps, travelers can protect themselves and keep other people healthy as well, during the holiday season and throughout the flu season.

[Karen Hunter] Thanks, Dr. Kozarsky. This is Karen Hunter, wishing all of you safe and healthy travels this holiday season.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.