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Stay Healthy During Holiday Travel, Family Gatherings

The holiday season is upon us and with it comes the hustle and bustle of shopping, get-togethers and travel. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) reminds everyone to take extra care to protect themselves and others from the flu during the holidays.

"Thanksgiving and other holidays are a great time to share – but not the flu," said Will Humble, ADHS Interim Director. "The H1N1 influenza virus will be an uninvited guest at pretty much every gathering, shopping mall and party. But you don't have to take it home with you, if you use good common sense health hygiene."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), if you are sick with symptoms of influenza-like illness, you should not travel. Such symptoms include fever (100° Fahrenheit or 37.8 ° Celsius), cough, fatigue and headache.

For those in good health, the CDC recommends that they pack travel-size hand soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer and tissues that are in keeping with Transportation Security Administration (TSA) regulations.

The holiday season is a social time, so traveling or not, Arizonans with plans to celebrate by gathering with friends and family should take precautions, including:

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Always wash after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- **If you are ill, avoid holiday parties and social situations** so as not to spread germs through contact with friends, family and coworkers who might be vulnerable to infection.
- **Develop a greeting** to replace handshaking and kissing. Flu spreads mainly person-to-person through coughing, sneezing and close contact.
- **Do not share drinking glasses.** If you're using paper cups write your name on it. Keep your cup in hand at all times to avoid any mix-up.
- **Cough or sneeze into a tissue** or, if you don't have a tissue, into your elbow or upper sleeve. Use a tissue only once and dispose of it immediately afterwards.

For more information, visit www.StopTheSpreadAZ.org.

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